

# AGUINALDO'S HOSTAGE



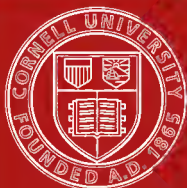
BY H. IRVING HANCOCK

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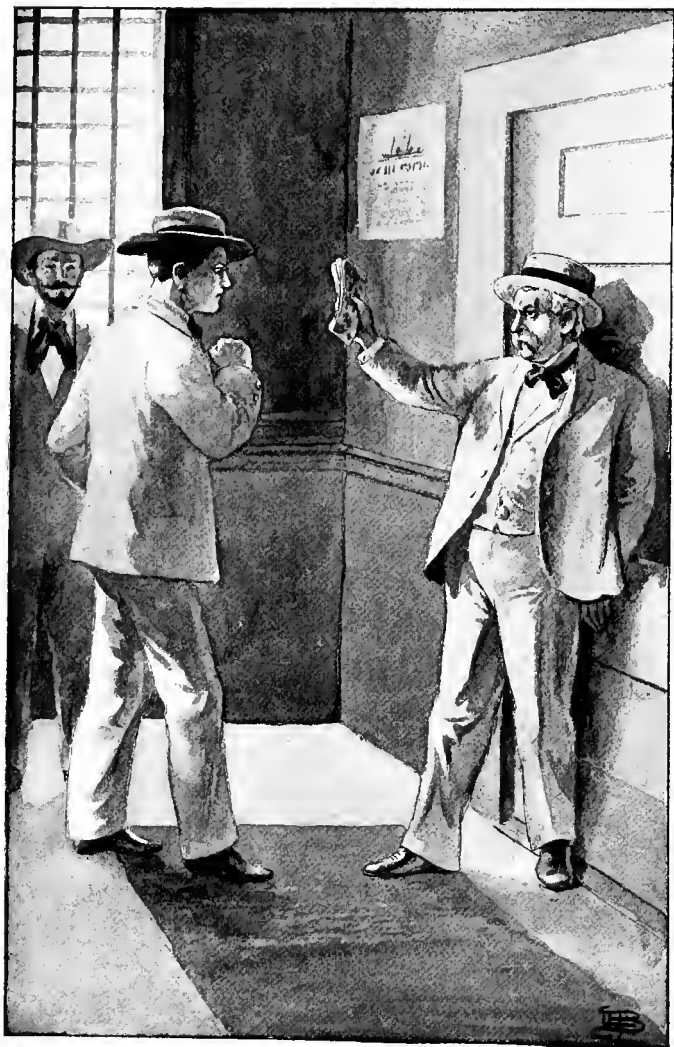
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# AGUINALDO'S HOSTAGE

OR

*Dick Carson's Captivity among the Filipinos*

BY

H. IRVING HANCOCK

(*War Correspondent*)

BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

1900

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AGUINALDO'S HOSTAGE.

Rockwell and Churchill Press  
BOSTON, U S A.

TO

**My Wife**

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY  
DEDICATED



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# AGUINALDO'S HOSTAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### THE TEMPTER

“THESE Americans!” exclaimed Herr Schwarz, waving his hands. “Bah!”

“They are certainly no match for us in business,” agreed Monsieur Lebœuf, emphasizing his opinion with a shrug and a smile. “Not in the Far East; at least, not in Manila.”

These two men, representing a type of reckless and unscrupulous speculators, who are unfortunately altogether too common in the Orient, sat at dinner on the veranda annex of the Paris Restaurant, overhanging the Pasig River, close to the Bridge of Spain, Manila. The time was early evening, and the date Jan. 30, 1899.

While these two diners sat apparently alone at the end of the veranda nearer to the bridge, several

tables at the further end of the veranda were occupied by gay parties of American officers and ladies. Brown, barefooted little waiters, clad in Filipino shirts and trousers of white cotton, glided noiselessly about, carrying the dishes and viands required by this merry throng. All here was life, laughter, and good cheer, despite the cloud of unrest and anxiety that hung over Manila. At the very outskirts of the city, in a long crescent, lay a Filipino insurgent army of close to thirty thousand men.

So far no hostile shots had been fired. But there was bad blood between the soldiers of both sides. Americans and Filipinos could hardly help scowling at each other when they passed. "President" Aguinaldo was issuing frequent and bumptious proclamations, calling upon the Americans to call their army home to the United States. The treaty by which Spain had ceded the sovereignty of the Philippine Islands to the United States lay before the American Senate. The Filipinos, almost to a man, scoffed at the treaty, and declared that Aguinaldo's government alone could prevail in the islands. In the city General Otis' army num-

bered barely half as many men as the brown army that hemmed Manila in on all sides. American cannon dominated the approaches to the city. Filipino cannon were posted opposite the American ordnance. Nightly trouble occurred between the outposts of the two armies. The situation, then, was that of a live coal on the head of a powder-barrel.

As a result, commerce was rushing along at a furious gait. Manila was stored with products of the islands which the outside world wanted. The merchants were eagerly buying and shipping as much of this merchandise as possible before the outbreak of rebellion should put a stiff check on commerce. Schwarz and Lebœuf, German and French financial adventurers, were trying to catch as many of the drips of this golden rain as possible. Each had a suite of offices in the city; each had a safe, a few desks, a small staff of clerks and agents; each kept a few samples of the insular products to show to customers. It was the business of each to buy cheap and sell dear, often resorting to tricks and corrupt practices to make large profits. Neither had a warehouse nor any stock of goods; both acted as commercial “go-

betweens." Hence their transactions were wholly on paper. Yet by combining a very considerable knowledge of the islands with a great deal of unscrupulous cleverness, both of these men had become rich. Their checks at either of the local banks would be honored for amounts representing fortunes. It is the temporary successes of such men that sometimes make weak, short-sighted people feel that business corruption pays better than strict integrity.

"How is it," asked Monsieur Lebœuf, "that you have profited so shrewdly from this American? You have not yet told me the details."

Herr Schwarz, a man of forty, of medium height, thick-set, and with rosy cheeks and fair hair, looked cautiously about him. He saw no one near enough to overhear.

"I have not yet caught my American," he confided to his companion. "But I shall, in the morning. You know him; it is that Taylor, from San Francisco, who came over here to see what he could pick up in the way of profitable transactions. He sees that the approaching revolution is going to make the output of Manila hemp very small during

the next year. Consequently he is buying a cargo of hemp to ship to the United States at once. Naturally, he wants to get his goods as cheaply as possible. I have succeeded in persuading him that I have the cheapest hemp in Manila. I have some that came into my possession rather cheap. I am selling it to my American for a profit of five thousand dollars. It is not bad pay for two days' work, eh?"

"Then you have not yet sold it?"

"I shall in the morning. Taylor has agreed to come to my office at nine o'clock to give me his answer and close the transaction. But there is a Señor Buenomalo, a Spanish half-breed merchant living in the San Sebastian suburb, who has a cargo of the same size, and who would sell it for two thousand dollars under the price. Can you imagine, my friend, what work I have had to keep these two men from meeting? During the last few days I have sent Señor Buenomalo here, and I have sent him there, all on false chases, and all to keep him and my American from falling into each other's paths. It would have cost me two thousand dollars had they met."

“You have been very clever to keep the two from meeting,” nodded M. Lebœuf.

“Trust me for that,” retorted Herr Schwarz, puffing out his fat cheeks with laughter. “And I have even a better chance coming. In a week or ten days there will arrive a Mr. Ellis, from New York. It is his purpose to buy as much Philippine tobacco as possible, with a view to exporting it to the United States. He believes that it will be a profitable thing to introduce Manila cigars more extensively into the United States. He and I have had some correspondence, and I know what he is willing to pay. Señor Marco, the Spaniard, controls about all the export tobacco there is at present in Manila. I know his price for it, and I can make seven or eight thousand dollars out of Ellis.”

“That is,” interjected M. Lebœuf, shrewdly, “if you can keep Ellis and Marco apart. If they meet, and compare figures, your profits will sail up to the sky in smoke.”

“See what I have done with Taylor,” observed Herr Schwarz, with as much pride as if he were talking of a strictly honest piece of business.



“What does it require for me to win these sacks of silver? Only a few lies, a few subterfuges.”

At this moment the scraping of a chair behind Herr Schwarz brought sudden dismay to both these highwaymen of finance—for that is what they were. Seven or eight feet from the German was a clump of potted palms. Neither of the pair had noticed that these palms concealed a table. The squeaking of the chair was caused by the rising of a youth of seventeen, who had just finished his dinner. That he was an American could be told at a glance. His ruddy, healthful face, his usually laughing, cheerful blue eyes, his clustering brown hair, and the proud yet amiable air of budding sovereignty with which he carried himself made him a wholesome sight to look upon. That he was both fearless and honest was an opinion that the average man would form from a glance or two.

Quitting his place of concealment, this youth started for the door, passing by the plotting pair without favoring either with a glance.

“I must be more careful,” growled Herr Schwarz.

“Decidedly,” assented Lebœuf, with a glint in his

treacherous eyes. "Do you know who that boy is?"

"I don't think I ever saw him."

"He is the clerk of your American, Taylor."

"Donnerwetter!" uttered the German, turning pale, then rising hastily. "And he has heard all I said!"

"Oh, yes, of course," assented the Frenchman. "That boy, whose name is Carson, is probably not deaf. In the morning, you may count upon it, he will tell his employer all he has heard."

"I must see that boy—must talk with him at once!" muttered Herr Schwarz, in a troubled voice. "Come with me, my good friend."

Richard Carson, generally known as "Dick," had already disappeared inside the building. The two men, on hastening, overtook him in the corridor that led to the street stairs.

"One moment, my young friend," begged Herr Schwarz, clapping a hand on the shoulder of the boy.

Wheeling about, Dick confronted the two men. He looked them over coolly, yet without insolence. There was something in his eyes that

told both men unmistakably that he had overheard them.

“Come with me just a moment,” requested Herr Schwarz, thrusting his hand familiarly under Carson’s arm. Though Dick went with them without a protest, his color heightened. The German led the way to a room overlooking the Escolta, as the principal thoroughfare of Manila is called. Pausing a moment at the threshold to make sure that the room was empty, Herr Schwarz led the way inside, carefully closing the door.

“Now, then,” spoke up Dick, “what do you want of me?”

“My friend,” began the German, amiably, “I cannot help feeling that you overheard a little business conversation of ours.”

“Well?” interrogated Dick, fixing his clear eyes on the other’s face.

“Well, you see,” smiled the German, “business secrets are sometimes rather embarrassing things. Now, as your present employer is due to sail for San Francisco on the morning of day after tomorrow, you will be out of a position, will you not?”

“Yes.”

“Therefore,” pursued Herr Schwarz, in his most persuasive tone, “it will hardly matter to you whether you go to the office to-morrow or not. A young man who has been as hard at work as you have needs a little relaxation. Here,” added the tempter, taking out his wallet, “is a bank-note for a hundred dollars in your American money. Take it and enjoy yourself to-morrow.”

He held out the bill with the most engaging air possible. Dick instantly recoiled, flushing hot with indignation.

“Well,” laughed the German, “are you so rich that you throw away money?”

“Some kinds!” And Dick’s voice vibrated wrathfully. “You are trying to bribe me, are you not?”

“Call it that, if you will,” smiled Herr Schwarz. “I put it another way myself. You have had the good fortune to hear a secret of mine. It is worth something to me to have that secret preserved. Take the money, my boy, and thank your good luck.”

By an effort Dick Carson steadied himself, regaining his normal color.

“You are asking me,” he replied, more calmly, “to betray my employer — to sell him into your hands that you may fleece him. And you are putting a price on my infamy.”

“Well?” questioned Herr Schwarz, reflectively. “Is not the price high enough? I will double it at once, but I warn you that is as high as I will go. You are driving a pretty sharp bargain.”

“I am driving no bargain at all,” retorted Dick Carson, with spirit. “I can have no bargain with a man of your stamp. Will you be kind enough to step out of the way, so that I can reach the door?”

“Three hundred dollars for your silence!” ventured Herr Schwarz, turning purple. As he spoke he backed against the door.

“I am an American!” cried Dick Carson, his voice again trembling, his heightened color returning. “My honesty is not for sale — at any price!”

It was now Herr Schwarz’s voice that trembled.

“Carson, you are a monster of avarice. But name your price. If it is within reason I will pay it. Speak! I have more money with me.”

“Let me pass!” insisted insulted Dick, clenching his fists.

“Never, until you agree! I will keep you in this room until it is too late for your babbling tongue to spoil my profits. We will choke you into silence, if you make that violence necessary.”

“Pooh!” sneered Dick, laughing contemptuously. “Do you think you are dealing with a baby? I have only to rush to the window and shout. A half dozen American soldiers, patrolling on the Escolta, will hear me. Now, stand aside, for my blood gets hot when I find myself talking with a rascal like you.”

And Dick made a determined move for the door.

“You will have to let him pass, my friend,” broke in M. Lebœuf. “It will not do for us to get into trouble at this time.”

Herr Schwarz, so advised, stood irresolute. Without hesitation Dick Carson shoved the German out of his way, pulled the door open, and ran downstairs, leaving the two rascals to stare at each other in undisguised dismay.

As for Dick, once out in the street he did not hesitate. Though the night was so warm that he felt the heat, clad in suit of white cotton though he was, he hurried down to the Plaza

del Moraga, went through it at full speed, up the Calle Santo Rosario, and never stopped until he found himself in the Hotel Oriente, where his employer stopped. As good luck would have it, he met Mr. Taylor coming down the broad staircase to the street. Frederick Taylor was a man of from thirty-three to thirty-five years old, rather tall, erect, and of that style of build called "strapping."

He looked the athlete in every line; amiable, keen, aggressive, he combined with other good qualities the extreme of American honesty. He had opened an office in Manila four weeks ago, preparatory to looking about for a good investment. Our hero was his only clerk.

"Ah, Carson, good evening," hailed Mr. Taylor, as soon as he perceived the boy. "Looking for me, were you? Then you were lucky, for I am on the point of going out. A minute later you would have missed me."

"Then I'm very thankful I got here in time," breathed panting Dick. "Listen, please, to what I have to tell you."

Mr. Taylor *did* listen, at first with an air of

good humor, which quickly changed to one of amazement as Dick's narrative proceeded.

“Going to cheat me out of a couple of thousand, was he?” questioned the employer, grasping the boy's hand. “And you were too honest to suit him? Good for you! You shan't lose by it, if the information turns out all right. But we've got to be quick. I happen to know where this Buenomalo lives. Come along, my boy.”

And Mr. Taylor hurried out on to the sidewalk, hastily moving his glance from one to another of the three pair of ponies that stood near the curb, each pair harnessed to a victoria. Selecting the pair which struck him as speediest, Mr. Taylor got into the vehicle, nodding to Dick to follow him. Away went the horses at the best trot they were capable of. Through Santa Cruz and Quiapo districts they went. Music came from many houses; laughter ran high; Manila was mirth-mad before the catastrophe. Young Filipinos were out in their most spotless white clothes. The Filipino women were resplendent in the garments of *jussi* cloth and silk. Chinese, in the costume of their native land, were abroad by thousands. Americans,



the wealthier Spaniards, and half-breeds and the smattering of Europe's nations who were in Manila in quest of commerce, drove out in carriages to get the evening air.

At one street corner in Quiapo the carriage bearing Dick and his employer was stopped for a few moments by the crowd that had gathered. In the centre of the crowd stood two little brown men in the uniform of Aguinaldo's insurgent army. Being without rifles or side arms, they had been permitted to come in through the lines in the daytime. While going about with companions they had come upon four khaki-clad American soldiers. From sneering glances the Filipinos were now quickly proceeding to open taunts. The soldiers behaving with coolness, the little brown men redoubled their taunts, to the intense enjoyment of the natives and Chinese in the crowd.

"You no good," taunted one of the Filipino soldiers. "*Tu mucho cobarde.*" (You are very cowardly.)

"Oh, perhaps," drawled the soldier addressed, with assumed good nature. "We may see about that. Who knows?"

Drawing a wicked-looking knife from under his clothes, the Filipino with a flourish traced a line in the dirt.

"Cross that line," he challenged, straightening up. "Cross it, if you dare to!"

"There's no need to," laughed the soldier, though his hands clenched. It was plain, too, that his three comrades were becoming uneasy.

"*Ah! Tu mucho cobarde!*" jeered the Filipino. With incredible impudence he spat in the American soldier's face.

In the carriage the faces of the two onlookers underwent a swift change. Dick's became red, Mr. Taylor's deadly white.

"Hold yourself in readiness to jump out and go to our fellows' rescue," whispered the latter. "There's going to be trouble."

But, to their amazement, the insulted soldier behaved himself in a way that brought out one of the grandest American characteristics — patience. For an instant the American looked as if he would spring upon his tantalizer. General Otis's orders were strict, however. At all hazards our soldiers were to be patient, avoiding every pretext for a

misunderstanding with the natives. What it cost the soldier probably no one can understand, but, checking his first movement of anger, he put up his coat-sleeve, wiped away the saliva, and replied :

“Some other time will do to answer you,” and, pushing their way through the jeering crowd, the four soldiers disappeared in the direction of their barracks.

“Blood’s going to flow in this city before very long,” predicted Mr. Taylor, as the carriage went on its way again. “When trouble does come I wouldn’t like to be the enemy to stand before that insulted soldier.”

From Quiapo they entered the San Sebastian district. The house of Señor Buenomalo stood in the centre of considerable grounds, at a distance of some hundred feet from the street, and was reached by a driveway.

“Stay outside until I call you,” directed Mr. Taylor, stepping from the carriage. He disappeared into the handsome stone building, and for some minutes Dick sat alone in the victoria, while the native coachman threw himself upon the grass, indolently regarding his two ponies.

"It's all right," at last called Mr. Taylor's voice from the inside. "Come in, Carson."

Entering the broad hallway, Dick stepped in through the second door on the right and found himself in the office of Señor Buenomalo, a man of forty, who greeted him with the courtly manner of the higher class of Spanish merchants. There was also a clerk of Buenomalo's in the room.

"It's all right, Carson," announced Mr. Taylor, turning to the boy. "I've made the purchase. We are about to sign the contract. You and the Señor's clerk will witness it."

This having been done, Mr. Taylor presented a check to Señor Buenomalo, making at the same time an appointment to meet at the American's office the following morning. This being done, the two callers departed.

After they had turned into the street, they had not driven a hundred yards when they passed another carriage, coming in the direction of Buenomalo's house. On the rear seat, smoking huge cigars, sat Herr Schwarz and his Gallic friend.

"Oh, I'm glad to see you, Schwarz," called out Mr. Taylor, in his most amiable voice. "I wanted

to tell you that I've decided not to buy your hemp. I've got another lot—a cheaper one—and have pushed the trade through. Sorry. Good night."

With that the two carriages parted, rolling in opposite directions. Herr Schwarz made some vehement remarks under his breath, but they were lost upon the two Americans.

"Carson," asked Mr. Taylor, two minutes later, "did you notice the look that Herr Schwarz gave you?"

"Not particularly, sir, except that he scowled at me."

"He is fully aware that you spoiled his deal with me."

"Of course."

"Dick," went on Mr. Taylor, with a great deal of earnestness, "I want to warn you against that man. You have honestly served me, and have prevented him from making a dishonest profit. From his false viewpoint he will feel that you have done him a great deal of injury—that you have cheated him. Look out for him. He is your enemy!"

## CHAPTER II

## HONESTY REWARDED

THOUGH Dick Carson wished to respect his employer's advice, he could not help smiling.

"I am in earnest," Mr. Taylor assured him.  
"Look out for that man!"

"But what harm can he do me, sir?"

"In the United States, perhaps no harm; perhaps much. But here in Manila, where all is soon to be indescribable turmoil, where blood will flow like water, where no life may be safe, and private revenge may be rampant, I should hate to have an enemy like Herr Schwarz."

But Dick still professed disbelief in danger.

"If things become as bad as you picture, sir, it will be a case of all Americans shoulder to shoulder, against all who are their enemies. I shall then be in the ranks of the Americans. No man can injure me unless he be openly in the ranks of our enemies. I do not see why

I should fear Herr Schwarz, or any other man."

"Remember, though, Carson," returned the employer, "that I have warned you. Recollect my advice at any time when you find yourself in any danger. I do not like to charge any man with evil—but—but—if you were going back to the United States with me to-morrow I should feel a great deal easier about you."

Having said which, Mr. Taylor changed to other topics. It was not long ere they reached the Hotel Oriente, at that time the most pretentious hostelry in Manila. Alighting, Dick was about to bid his employer good-night when the latter broke in with:

"Come inside with me a moment, Carson."

Wondering, Dick followed his employer into the office. Addressing the clerk, Mr. Taylor said:

"Let me have that sack of mine in the safe, if you please."

While Mr. Taylor broke the seals upon the sack, Dick stood looking out of the window upon the animated scenes in the Plaza. It was some minutes later when his employer murmured in his ear:

“Come with me, Carson.”

Outside in the lobby Mr. Taylor halted.

“Carson,” he began, with emotion, “your faithfulness has saved me a considerable sum of money. It is no more than fair that you should be rewarded. Take this, and accept with it my thanks.”

There was a clink of coin. Dick found his outstretched hand heavy with the weight of yellow gold.

“What am I to do with this, sir?” he asked in astonishment.

“Keep it,” was the decisive answer. “Your honesty has saved me two thousand dollars. I am rewarding you with a tithe of it. You are fairly entitled to the two hundred dollars which I have given you.”

“But I’m not,” broke quickly from Dick’s lips. He tried to hand the money back, but Mr. Taylor avoided the out-thrust hand.

“Nonsense,” said the employer, quickly. “Didn’t you save me, to-night, a great deal more than I have offered you?”

“Yes, sir, but” —

“There are no ‘buts’ about it. You could have



made far more by betraying me than I have offered you. Keep the money. It is yours by right."

Though Dick still demurred, Mr. Taylor made him accept the reward.

"And now," added Mr. Taylor, when he had prevailed, "hurry home, and to bed with you. To-morrow will be your last day at the office, and I shall need you there early."

So young Carson made his way home through the crowded streets, past the many sentries, to the door of the Spanish family with which he lodged within the confines of the Walled City, that original Manila on the other side of the Pasig River.

Arrived at the house, Dick found the outer door unlocked, for the family had not yet retired. Passing through the stone-flagged hallway, he made his way up the first flight of stairs to his room in the rear of the building.

It was a narrow little room, more like a cell than a lodging, yet it served to contain the boy and all his belongings. There was a single window, looking out on a small and rather squalid back yard. The room itself possessed a bare floor of polished mahogany — for in Luzon this rare wood is as cheap

as pine in the United States. There was a dressing-stand, a single chair, and a narrow bed overhung by a canopied mosquito netting. The bed itself, possessing a framework of mahogany, had a net of canework, like the seat of a chair, in lieu of a mattress. A thin, hard pillow, of Chinese manufacture, is all that remains to be described.

Not taking the trouble to light a candle, Dick Carson began to disrobe, secreting his money under his pillow. Within five minutes, disregarding of the multitude of mosquitoes buzzing outside the net, he was sound asleep.

And now the reader is entitled to a short account of how our hero came to be in Manila in this eventful year; most of all, how he came to be in that nest of peril unprotected by parent or friend.

Middle Ohio was the boy's birthplace. Almost ever since he could remember, however, Dick had lived in Hong Kong, that valuable British island possession to the north of Luzon. His father was a physician; Dick's mother had died before the boy reached the age of ten. Dr. Carson had died of fever in the October following Dewey's magnificent victory. There had not been much left of the doc-

tor's estate when all was settled up and the balance handed to the orphan boy. Dick had found himself confronted by two alternatives — one to sail to the United States, and find himself almost penniless upon his arrival in San Francisco; the other to go to Manila, arriving with a few hundred dollars in what then seemed the Golconda of the world. American clerks — Americans of all kinds in civil pursuits — were then in demand at Manila. It seemed too good a chance to be lost. Seized by the Philippine fever, Dick Carson had gone to Manila. Upon his arrival he prudently banked his slender capital, drawing upon it only as he needed the means to live.

It was in late December before he secured his first position as clerk to Mr. Taylor. And now, after another day's work he was to be out of employment — with his capital not a little increased, but still without work.

On the next morning, that of the last day of January, Dick was awake very early, reaching the office some time before nine o'clock, when the day's work was stipulated to begin. Retracing his steps as far as the bank, Dick deposited the money given

him the evening before. Returning to the office, he had still some minutes to wait before Mr. Taylor arrived.

Through the morning he was rather busy, doing the finishing-up clerical work with which Mr. Taylor provided him. In the course of the forenoon Señor Buenomalo dropped in, and the last of the details regarding the shipment of the cargo of hemp were arranged. In the afternoon there was nothing to do. At three o'clock Mr. Taylor paid his young clerk, gave him some excellent advice, locked the door, shook hands with him, and Dick's present employment was over.

In Herr Schwarz's office, on the second floor of a stone building in the Plaza del Moraga, things went in a much different way that day. In the first place, all of the four clerks were busy.

In the private office, through the forenoon, the German speculator sat brooding. He could not console himself for the loss of that brilliant deal in hemp. His fingers twisted and writhed every time he thought of incorruptible Dick Carson; there was a perpetual scowl on the rascal's face.

“And that boy overheard, also, what I said

about Mr. Ellis," thought Herr Schwarz. "When Ellis gets here the boy will warn him — these Americans stick together so clannishly. I have to thank this boy for my loss of last night; through him also I shall lose much more from Ellis. May Heaven confound the boy!"

Then, as if certain that Heaven would not become engaged in any such wicked business, the German fell to thinking. The longer black thoughts surged through his brain, the more evil became the wretch's smile. He was interrupted at length by an apologetic cough. Looking up, he beheld one of his clerks, Herr Limpe.

Now, it would be hard to find a more pitiful case than that of this poor slave of commerce. Always weakly, Herr Limpe had come to Manila some years ago, in the hope of finding both health and fortune in the tropics. He had been cruelly disappointed. In Manila, when the Spaniards held sway, clerks had seldom earned good wages. Herr Limpe was not one of the few fortunate ones. Moreover, the consumptive tendency, which has a strong hold on the people of these islands, had claimed the poor clerk as a victim. He flushed

painfully at intervals through the day; his cough racked him so that he was rapidly finishing with life. Herr Limpe had now but one thought — to get back to the dear old Fatherland for his last months of life.

“Well, what do you want, Limpe?” asked Herr Schwarz, rather gruffly.

“My dear Herr,” replied the clerk, the hectic color in his cheeks deepening, while he stammered pitifully, “I have come to ask some assistance of you.”

“Rather an extraordinary place to come,” was the hard retort.

“But, my dear Herr, have I not served you faithfully for many years?”

“And have you not been paid for your services?”

For a moment the poor clerk looked as if, utterly losing courage, he would turn and flee back to his desk. But the urgency of his case made him desperate. He determined upon another effort.

“My dear Herr Schwarz, I appeal to you in the name of the good God to hear me through. If you repulse me again I shall be in despair.

This, then, is my case : The climate here is killing me. If I stay here any longer I shall soon die. My dear Herr, can you not understand how I pine for the dear Fatherland?"

Big tears came into the poor clerk's eyes, rolled down his wasted cheeks. As soon as he could speak he resumed :

"My dear Herr, in two or three days a German bark, the *Mollenhauer*, will sail from here for Hamburg. The captain will take me as a passenger, if I pay him one hundred and twenty-five dollars. Now, though I have always tried to save as much as possible of my wages, medicines have cost me so much, and the coming of Americans has made the cost of living so much higher, that I have but fifty dollars. My dear Herr, I appeal to you to lend me the other seventy-five dollars, that I may go home. If I live I promise faithfully to send you the money as fast as I can earn it in the Fatherland."

Herr Schwarz's first impulse was to refuse this appeal. Looking intently at the clerk, however, while thinking of other matters, he finally replied :

"Limpe, a plan has occurred to me by which

you may be able to earn the money you require in an hour or two."

Herr Limpe looked dumbfounded; then, a new thought coming into his mind, he showed his uneasiness.

"If—if—if"—he stammered, "it is anything honest."

"Since when have you known Herr Schwarz as a rascal?" angrily demanded the merchant.

"Oh, I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Herr," cried the poor clerk, anxiously. "I must have been beside myself when I spoke so. But you must remember, my dear Herr, that I am consumed with anxiety. Besides, when I feel so near the grave I cannot think of doing anything for which my conscience would reproach me."

"Conscience!" sneered Herr Schwarz, but he said it in such a low voice that the clerk did not hear him. "Listen, Limpe. I offer you so much money partly out of compassion for you, and partly because the service I may propose requires extreme cleverness. It is only this—a ruse of business—in which I could use your help. There is a certain young man in Manila whose



presence here just now interferes with some of my commercial plans. I wish to get him to leave Manila for a day or two under a pretext—that is all.”

“So?” asked the clerk, dubiously.

“Do you know a young American, by the name of Richard Carson?”

“I am very sure that I do not, my dear Herr.”

“Are you equally certain that he does not know you as one of my clerks?”

“I do not see how he could know me.”

“Then draw up a chair, and listen to what I have to say.”

Herr Limpe obeyed. There was a long conference, in which Herr Schwarz did most of the talking, Limpe frequently nodding his head in sign of understanding.

“I understand, my dear Herr, and I shall try to do it for you,” said the clerk at last.

“Succeed, and you shall have your passage back to the Fatherland. But not a word of this to any one, as you value my help.”

The clerk, protesting, tried to thank his employer, but Herr Schwarz, cutting him short, sent him

back to his desk. With a smile of deep evil, Herr Schwarz muttered to himself:

“Now, my young Herr Carson, we shall see whether you will be sorry.”

Then, with a look still more grim:

“Perhaps sorry that you are alive!”

## CHAPTER III

## UNWITTING TREACHERY

“CARSON, do you know I feel uneasy at leaving you behind in Manila?”

It was Mr. Taylor who spoke. He and his ex-clerk stood under the shade of the porch at the office of the Captain of the Port. It was the morning of Wednesday, the first of February, at nine o'clock. An hour later the American merchant was due to sail on the British steamer *Ming Suey* to Hong Kong, at which port he would catch the San Francisco bound steamer. Twenty feet away lay Mr. Taylor's baggage, which a soldier serving under the Captain of the Port was perfunctorily examining before the permit could be issued to take the baggage over to the steamer.

“You needn't feel uneasy about me, Mr. Taylor,” responded the boy. “I shall get along here all right.”

“But suppose the rebellion breaks out? Manila’s streets may be deluged in blood.”

“If I am not thought too young to enlist, I shall in that case go into the army if they will take me for a short term,” replied Dick, his eyes flashing with spirit. “When American blood begins to flow the place for an American like me is in the army.”

“Then there is Herr Schwarz. I can’t help fearing that he will play you some mischief for your part in that hemp business.”

“Let him try it,” said Dick, confidently. “What can he do? Surely an American ought to be safe here in Manila, with a whole American army to guarantee his protection. Besides, I am not through with Herr Schwarz. He has planned about the same trick on a Mr. Ellis that he tried to play on you. When Mr. Ellis arrives here I shall make it my business to find him and warn him. In such matters as these Americans should stand together.”

“By Jove, you’re right!” cried Mr. Taylor. “Now, see here, Ellis will know me by reputation, at least. I’ll give you my card to him. It will help matters.”

On the back of his card Mr. Taylor quickly pencilled :

You can believe the bearer, Richard Carson, implicitly in what he has to tell you.

(Signed)

TAYLOR.

“Show this card to Ellis when he gets here,” said Mr. Taylor, passing the pasteboard to our hero. “Yet we could warn Ellis by a letter left for him at the post office. I wish you’d reconsider, Carson, and go back to the States with me. I will pay your fare, if you’ll go. There’s yet time to jump into a *quilez*, drive over to your lodgings, get your belongings, and get back here. What do you say?”

But Dick shook his head.

“I am very grateful to you, Mr. Taylor, but I long ago decided to stay in Manila. There’s going to be a lot of money made here by Americans, and I don’t see why, with all my life ahead of me, I shouldn’t stay here and make some of it. The chances are brighter here than in America. Why, I already have money enough of my own to go into some small business when I feel myself fitted for it.”

“Your baggage is all right, sir,” said the soldier, approaching. “If you’ll lock it, and then come inside with me, you will get your permit.”

Dick stood watching the scene, always a lively and constantly varying one at the port. It is situated some quarter of a mile up from the mouth of the Pasig River. The Pasig is really more of a canal. Up and down this stream there is a constant procession of *casco*s. These are Malay craft about the size of our own canal boats. The part of a *casco* that is reserved for living purposes is covered over with matting. Aboard one of these craft sometimes as many as two or three families live, the men, women, and half-grown boys forming its crew. Just beyond the gunwale, on either side of the *casco*, is a narrow platform made of bamboo poles. On either platform is a member of the crew, who, provided with a long pole, runs to the forward end of the platform, striking the bottom with the pole. Holding it there, he trots leisurely back to the after end of the platform. By repeating the operation again and again, these two polers propel the craft, while the *padrone*, or master, stands at the stern with one hand upon the tiller. These

*cascos* are the lighters and small cargo carriers of Manila. Out on the deeper waters of the bay a sail is used.

There are always innumerable *bancos*, or dug-out canoes in the river, engaged in ferrying passengers across the stream, and in carrying quantities of merchandise too small for the *cascos*. Launches by the dozen ply up and down the river. The smaller sailing and steam craft are able to come up into the river, mooring at the stone jetties on either side.

On the port side of the river there is always a hubbub of *quilez* and *caromattas*. Both are vehicles drawn by single ponies. The former looks like a miniature herdie, and, with great squeezing, will carry four persons. The *caromatta*, a two-wheeled affair with a narrow front seat for the Tagal driver, has also a rear seat for two passengers. It is one of the most uncomfortable vehicles in the world.

In and out amid this throng of carriages threads a multitude of jabbering Chinese coolies, who carry burdens of incredible weight and size. Coolies and natives by the hundreds are engaged in the work of longshoremen in loading or unloading the vessels at the jetties.

All this presented a picture vivid enough to interest Dick Carson. Though he had seen it countless times before, it always seemed new to him. Interest was now lent to the picture by the landing of a battalion of soldiers, brought in *cascos* from one of the great troopships anchored out in the bay.

"Got my permit all right, Carson," announced Mr. Taylor, re-appearing. "And here are the coolies who are going to carry my baggage to the *banco*. Now, good-by, my dear boy, and my best wishes for your success and happiness."

With a warm pressure of the hand the San Francisco merchant was gone. Dick watched him crossing the river in a *banco*, saw the coolies take up the baggage on the other side, and watched Mr. Taylor disappear behind the hull of the *Ming Suey*.

"And now," murmured Dick, "comes the pleasant task of finding another position. Will it be easy or hard?"

"Are you not Mr. Carson?" questioned a voice at his side.

"Yes," answered Dick, turning.

It was Herr Limpe who addressed him. The



poor clerk looked more flushed and ill than ever. He was trembling violently, so eager was he over the success of a negotiation that promised for him a passage back to the Fatherland.

“You were a clerk to Mr. Taylor,” went on Limpe, eagerly, repeating the lesson in which Herr Schwarz had so thoroughly drilled him. “I have often heard Mr. Taylor speak of your honesty and cleverness.”

“Thank you,” responded Dick. “But I am rather puzzled, sir, that since you remember having seen me, I should not also remember you.”

“My name is Tillerman,” replied Limpe, his hectic flush deepening vividly over the lie which Herr Schwarz had impressed upon him as necessary. The shame of the poor clerk over the falsehood which Herr Schwarz had persuaded him was innocent enough brought on a violent fit of coughing. When it was over, the clerk resumed:

“I spoke to you, just now, because, supposing that you are at present out of employment, it occurred to me that you might like to undertake some business for which I can afford to pay you well.”

“Then you did quite right in speaking to me, and I thank you for it,” responded Dick, delighted. “I *am* out of employment, and ready for anything in the line of square dealing.”

“Would you have any objection to trying to collect a bill for me?”

“Certainly not.”

“Have you any hesitation about going to Malolos?”

“To Aguinaldo’s ‘capital’?” echoed Dick, his eyes now wide open with surprise.

“Yes; though if you think it the part of discretion not to”—

“Why should I think so?” broke in Dick. “There is no rebellion yet; perhaps there won’t be any. An American has as much right to go to Malolos as any one else.”

Herr Limpe could have hugged himself for sheer delight. His task was proving far easier than he had dared to hope.

“I have a bill to be collected there,” went on the sham Mr. Tillerman. “As you can see, I am far from well. In fact, I am sailing for—England the day after to-morrow. I have so much

to attend to here that I cannot possibly get to Malolos. Yet neither can I afford to lose the money that is due me up there. I know of your honesty through your employer. The bill is for sixteen hundred dollars, Mexican. (About half that amount in American money.) If you will undertake this for me, Mr. Carson, I will pay you twenty dollars, American, and your railway fare. In addition, if you collect the full amount, I will pay you five per cent. commission. There is little danger in the trip, since I have a pass from the Filipino government, good for 'bearer.' See, here it is."

And Limpe, with trembling fingers, held out the slip of paper. It appeared to be a pass in due form, signed by one of Aguinaldo's "colonels."

"You speak Spanish fairly well?" asked the clerk.

"What I have picked up since coming to Manila."

"And Tagalo?"

"Oh, some forty or fifty useful words. I do not boast of my ability to talk the Malay lingo."

"Nevertheless," went on Limpe, after another brief attack of coughing, "you know enough of

both languages to serve me. It is that I know you to be honest that would make you most valuable to me. There are few men in Manila that I would be willing to trust."

"You are offering very big pay for my services," suggested Dick.

"Because, whatever you may think, my dear young man, it will be a rather unpleasant mission for you. The sixty dollars that you stand a chance to earn will be none too much, considering all the annoyance you may have to put up with from the natives. Will you go?"

"Against whom is the bill?"

"It is against a native Tagalo, a man named Josemos."

"Do you think he will pay?"

"If you convince him that I am going to England very soon and need the money he will pay, for he is an honest fellow, and I hear that he has plenty of money just now."

"But how will he know that I have a right to collect the money?"

"I will give you written authority. He knows my handwriting."

“Very well, I will go. Write your authorization, and give me the pass.”

Poor Herr Limpe's eyes shone like stars at this easy success of his unwitting treachery. He was almost delirious with joy.

“There is a train going within twenty minutes,” he cried, eagerly. “Will you take that? For you may have to spend two days in Malolos, and it is therefore well to start as quickly as possible. I hope to see you back by to-morrow night, with the money.”

“Yes, I will go, if you will hurry to get the papers ready for me,” promised unsuspecting Dick.

Disappearing inside the office, Herr Limpe presently came back with the papers, including the pass, all in readiness. With feverish haste he led Dick up the water-front street to where the waiting train now stood. The German seemed pursued by a secret fear that the American boy would yet take it into his head to “back out.” But Dick, his ticket purchased, hurried to one of the first-class cars, clambering into it.

“Good-by, Mr. Tillerman,” he called through the open window. “You may look for me to-mor-

row night. I will look you up at once at the address on the paper you have given me. Good-by."

Unable to wear the mask any longer, poor Limpe hurried from the train, gaining a vantage ground from which he could watch the train unobserved. Another watcher, at a different point, was Herr Schwarz, whose face now wore a look of triumph.

In the first-class coach, in which there were seats for ten, there were, besides our hero, an Englishman going as far as Caloocan, the first station, and three swaggering little Filipino officers, each with many yards of gold lace sewn upon his blue and white striped uniform. Before the train started seven more officers entered the car. It was necessary for them to stand.

Unsuspicious Dick! As the train moved out he had not a thought of a shadow of harm. It looked to him like a pleasant and profitable little trip. Protected by the pass, he would be able to see a part of the island concerning which he had long been curious. The Englishman inquired where our young friend was going, but merely raised his eyebrows when Dick said "Malolos."

Half way out to Caloocan—that is to say, less than a couple of miles from the station—Filipino soldiers, armed to the teeth with rifles, *bolos*, and pistols began to appear in droves. There were native outposts camped close to the track, and long lines of trenches running on either side of the track.

As the train stopped at Caloocan the officers hurried out of the car, the Englishman also getting out. An important little brown man, in the uniform of a major, stepped into the car.

“You are riding too far for an American,” he said, in Spanish. “You will have to leave the train, and return to Manila.”

“Will this pass do me any good?” asked Dick, holding up the slip of paper.

“Ah, I did not know you had this,” replied the major, after scanning the document. “You are permitted, then, to go as far as Malolos, but remember that if you stay on the train beyond that point you will be arrested and probably shot as a spy.”

“Thank you,” said Dick. “That is as far as I am going. And to have to take this kind of

talk from a pompous Malay on American soil!" he muttered under his breath as he watched the major climb down from the car.

Back came his fellow-passengers, the Filipino officers. And now the reason for their absence from the car was plain. Forbidden by the American authorities to wear their side-arms into Manila, they had left them at Caloocan. When they returned they wore a brave array of swords and cavalry revolvers. They swaggered more than ever; all were smoking; a few had cigarettes, but by far the greater number puffed at long black cigars. They chattered incessantly while reëntering the car, their number being increased by two or three other little brown officers. Quickly the seats were filled. Some had to stand up. One of these approached our hero.

"Why should *you* have a seat?" demanded the Filipino. "Get up and give it to me."

A chorus of laughter greeted this order. Dick flushed red with indignation. But he was in an enemy's country, and felt it more and more as he looked out on the swarm of insurgent soldiers standing on the platform.



“The easiest way is the best, in this case,” reflected Dick, making a great effort to keep cool. He rose, and his tormentor glided into the vacated seat.

The ride through this part of the island was an instructive one. Great, broad, level rice fields, with here and there a clump of forest, or grove of banana trees, met the boy's gaze. Every mile or two there was a village of thatched *nipa* huts, with, in the centre of the group, a church and two or three other stone buildings. Just the other side of the Tulihan River there were lines of such formidable intrenchments that Dick opened his eyes rather wide.

“*Carramba!* This young Americano is playing the spy on us!” shouted one of the Filipinos. “See here, *gringo*, stand at the end of the car and keep your eyes on the wood-work.”

“I am not playing the spy,” retorted Dick. “I am on an errand of commerce.”

“Nevertheless if you do not stand at the end of the car, and do as I told you, we will toss your carcass out for the crows to peck at!”

These little brown fellows were in a mood for

bullying. Dick's helplessness gave him no alternative to obeying. With eyes flashing, he walked to the end of the car, pushed on by several hands.

At Polo several of the officers left the train, but others took their places. At Guiguinto there was a further change of passengers, but all entered alike into the spirit of making the American boy stand where he could see nothing of the country through which they were passing. At every railway station the platforms were found to be swarming with insurgent soldiery. It began to look as if there were no limit to the number of Aguinaldo's fighting men. Dick shuddered when he thought of what bloody work it would be, even for an army of the best fighting men in the world, to disperse such hordes of enemies.

Barasoain was reached at last, after more than an hour and a half on the way. This is the station at which passengers for Malolos alight. All but two of the officers left the train here. One of them seized Dick by the arm.

"Come, Americano, this is where you get off, and be quick about it!"

Stepping down from the train, Dick found himself in the midst of a throng of soldier and civilian Tagals. This boy, specimen of a hated race, was the cynosure of all eyes at once. A young lieutenant pushed his way up to him, remarking sternly :

“ Come, you cannot stay here without a pass.”

“ Here it is,” replied Dick, tendering the document.

“ Wait here until I see about it,” directed the officer, and he vanished through the crowd.

“ He’s an Americano, and the Americanos are no good,” remarked one rebel soldier to another.

“ Perhaps he sympathizes with us,” jeered another soldier.

• As the train moved out the crowd began to press closely around the American boy.

“ Let the señor,” called a voice loudly, “ shout ‘ *Viva la Republica Filipina!* ’ ” (Long live the Filipino Republic.)

The suggestion caught like wild-fire.

“ Yes, yes ! ” came a chorus of shouts. “ Let him say it, or let him perish.”

“ You hear, señor ? ” questioned the first one

who had proposed it. "Now let us see how wide you can open your mouth."

Dick took refuge in silence. The clamor grew. Soon there were half a hundred men taking up the cry. They pressed closer and closer to him.

"Let him cheer for our republic or die!" dinned the demand. Dick, pallid but cool, clenched his hands, determined that not even the fear of death should make him a traitor by as much as a word.

"What is this disturbance here? Let me see the Americano!" came the command, in a stern voice. The crowd yielded, permitting a middle-aged Filipino, dressed in the uniform of a colonel, to reach Dick's side.

"Well?" demanded the colonel, brusquely. "What are you doing here?"

"I came on business," replied Dick, while his mob of tormentors surged about him in the effort to hear what was said. "And I am provided with a pass signed by one of your Filipino officers."

"Let me see that pass," demanded the colonel.

"I gave it to a lieutenant here, a minute ago."





“ A lieutenant? His name?”

“ That I don't know, as I never saw him before.”

“ Describe him to me.”

Dick started to obey, but his eye suddenly rested on the very officer, standing on the edge of the crowd.

“ There's the man,” cried Dick, pointing.

“ Lieutenant,” summoned the colonel, “ step here. This young man says he gave you a pass. Where is it?”

The lieutenant, making his way through the crowd, let his glance rove over the boy.

“ The Americano?” he questioned. “ He never gave me anything like a pass!”

For the first time Dick Carson began to scent real danger.

## CHAPTER IV

## A PRISONER OF WAR

"BUT I did," protested Dick, "just a minute ago. Surely you must remember it."

"Is the boy lying?" asked the colonel, looking sharply at the lieutenant.

"He lies like an American, Señor Colonel," was the unblushing answer.

Dick glanced from one to the other in deepest amazement. How could he know that he was witnessing a rehearsed play between the two?

"Enough!" said the colonel, crisply. "Lieutenant, I place the American in your charge as a prisoner. Take him to the carcel."

"The carcel?" repeated Carson, bewilderedly. He could not understand why these officials, however much they disliked the Americans, should want to send him to prison.

"Make way for the American prisoner!" shouted the lieutenant, derisively. "Come along, you dog!"



Jeering, the crowd fell back. Dick tried to resist, but two or three of the brown soldiers pushed him from behind with no gentle force.

“There is a mistake here — a big one!” shouted the boy in Spanish.

“Tell the provost-general all about it, then,” advised the colonel, from a distance, as the prisoner was hurried around to the rear of the station. Here a *caromatta* stood. Dick was lifted almost bodily into the rear seat, while the lieutenant followed him. Amid a babel of insulting remarks the vehicle left the depot, turning into a road that leads to Malolos.

“Why did you play such a trick upon me?” demanded the boy, turning an indignant face upon the lieutenant.

But the little brown officer merely chuckled. His look admitted the truth of what our hero charged. There was something sinister in the Filipino’s eyes. He lit a cigarette, blew out a mouthful of smoke, and mockingly observed:

“I would recommend you, señor, to have nothing more to say. It is the simplest way. What will happen will happen.”

“This blackguard is right, after all,” thought Dick, writhing with inward anguish. “He didn’t lie about me in that fashion out of a mere whim. Perhaps he was acting under orders. I shall do better to keep silent and spend my time in thinking.”

The road, hot and dusty, led between two lines of *nipa* houses. In the larger yards there were banana trees. Chickens and pigs abounded in nearly all the yards. The street itself was thick with soldiers, most of them without guns, and lounging about smoking. Women, smoking cigars, held the hands of small children who were puffing at cigarettes. In many of the houses, as they went by, Dick caught glimpses of insurgent soldiers, in uniform, lolling about at home until summoned into the field by Aguinaldo. Less than a mile from the depot our hero passed the church, a massive pile of fine architecture, where Aguinaldo and his “congress” were then holding daily sessions. An arch, gayly decorated, had been erected before the door of the church. Insurgent soldiers were drawn up before this arch, and at various points around the building, while the spacious grounds around the

church were filled by a mass of native men and women, many of them in gala attire. Venders of fruit, eggs, betel nuts, aerated waters, and cigars, their goods displayed in baskets carried on their heads, were doing a driving business.

Some one caught sight of Dick. In an instant word flew about that an Americano had been captured and was being taken to the place of execution. There was a rush for the *caromatta*. In a twinkling it was surrounded. Imprecations, first, and then fruit began to fly as the pony was brought to a stop.

“My friends,” laughed Dick’s conductor, good-naturedly, “you are right to throw bad fruit at an American. I do not blame you. But you are also likely to ruin the uniform of a loyal soldier of the republic. Stop, I beg you, and let us through.”

With a good deal of laughing the request was obeyed. In a minute more the vehicle was in another plaza, where there was a second church, larger and handsomer, even, than the congress building, and, like the first church, used for Filipino government purposes. Out of this plaza to the westward led a narrow street on which stood, in

the midst of dwellings, the little two-story stone and mortar building that the Spaniards had once upon a time used as a jail.

Before the door of this building stood a half dozen bare-footed soldiers, armed with rifles to which the bayonets were fixed. Catching sight of the officer, they lined up and saluted as the *caromatta* stopped.

"Get out here," ordered the lieutenant, giving the boy a shove, and Carson, stepping to the ground, passed between the soldiers and entered through the door of the carcel. It was cool in here in the shadow, as contrasted with the blazing heat outside,—so cool in fact that Dick shivered slightly. There were three or four soldiers in the corridor, squatting on benches until the appearance of their officer caused them to rise and stand at attention.

"Jose, *aquí!*" summoned the lieutenant, loudly.

"*Aquí,*" the Spanish word for "here," is the summons mainly used in Luzon.

Before long a fat, sleepy-looking fellow, bare-footed and clad in white cotton shirt and trousers, with a cigarette hanging listlessly from his lips,

appeared. The revolver in a holster at his belt and the bunch of keys which he carried in one hand made it apparent that this fellow was the jailer.

“Jose,” said the lieutenant, shrugging one shoulder in Dick’s direction, “here is a prisoner whom Colonel Parma sends you. See that he is taken good care of.”

Jose, after looking the American boy scowlingly over, nodded to him to follow, while the lieutenant, turning upon his heel, left the building. Dick accompanied his new captor without saying a word. He well knew that it would do no good to waste time in argument with a fellow as stupid and unimportant as Jose appeared to be. Jose turned to the right, leading the way up a flight of damp, ill-smelling stairs. Then down a corridor, past many cells, through the grated doors of which Chinese prisoners glanced apprehensively out, staring stolidly at the latest acquisition to their ranks.

“In here,” said Jose, languidly, pausing before a cell-door and unlocking it. There was a Chinaman in there already, squatting on one of

the two wooden benches which formed the only furniture of the little cell. The Chinaman was a loathsome sight, and malodorous. His trousers, coming only down to the knees, showed two calves covered with hideous-looking ulcers.

"You Melican man?" inquired the Chinaman, looking at the boy, and speaking in broken Spanish, as soon as Jose had turned the key in the rusty lock and gone away.

"Yes," admitted Dick, dropping upon the other bench and looking at his repulsive cell-mate.

"I heap solly for you," went on the Chinaman. "You Melican man; Filipino do for you *likee this*." The Chinaman made a sufficiently clear gesture of drawing one lean finger across his throat.

"What you done?" inquired the Chinaman, after a pause.

"Nothing," answered Dick, shortly.

"No matter; Filipino allee same do this for you"—again the not reassuring gesture across the yellow throat. "You Melican man—that plenty enough to do. Oh, yes! You see!"

Not very cheering, this information so readily imparted!

But Dick, trying to keep up a brave front in adversity, answered with a smile. Then, the Chinaman's curiosity exhausting itself, Dick let his head fall forward into his hands. He thought and thought and thought, trying to solve the enigma of why he had been thus treated. That it was not solely because he was an American he felt sure. Yet, the more he thought, the greater the puzzle became.

"You got cigarette?" asked the Chinaman.

"No; I don't smoke. Sorry I can't help you."

Disappointed in his hope of a smoke, the Chinaman relapsed into silence, and, putting one foot up on the other knee, began to examine his sores with great interest. The odor exhaled by this Mongolian was so disagreeable that Dick moved his own bench as far away as the limits of the cell permitted. An hour passed. Carson found himself no nearer a solution of the mystery of his arrest. Soft foot-falls in the corridor outside heralded the approach of Jose, who, unlocking the door, ordered:

"Come with me, señor."

Through the corridor, down the stairs, into a dismal office at the rear of the building young

Carson followed his conductor. At one side of the room, behind a flat-top desk, sat a Filipino official in military uniform. Colonel Parma was seated near him. There were four other officers present, besides three private soldiers. At a sign from the official behind the desk one of the soldiers approached Carson, inserting his hands into all of the boy's pockets and dumping upon the desk all that was found.

"Now, señor," said Colonel Parma, "you will account to the provost-general for your presence in Malolos."

No task could have been more to our hero's liking. He rapidly detailed his agreement with "Mr. Tillerman," described his trip and his experiences at the Barasoain station, and dwelt at no little length upon the incidents connected with the surrender of his pass.

"But Lieutenant Silvela has assured me," broke in Colonel Parma, "that this American did not hand him any pass."

"I did, though, upon my honor as an American," persisted hapless Dick.

With a snort the provost-general picked up the



bill of "Mr. Tillerman," turned to the other officers present, and inquired:

"Gentlemen, did any of you ever hear of a resident of Malolos named Josemos?"

One after another the officers thus interrogated shook their heads.

"It has been well proven," said the provost, glaring at Dick, "that you had no pass; that you came to Malolos to collect a bill against a man who does not exist. You are an American, and have penetrated our lines. What are we to think?"

Giving Dick no chance to reply, the provost-general continued:

"It is clear enough that you are a spy. It will be of no use for you to deny the charge. Your fate must be decided under the rules of war!"

To thunderstruck Dick Carson, surrounded by the enemies of his race, this pronouncement came like the clap of fate.

## CHAPTER V

## THE PRISONER'S DREAM

"BUT if you will listen to me—only believe me"—cried the astounded boy.

"I won't," interjected the provost, crisply. "Why should I? All our prisoners would tell us tales of innocence if we gave them the chance. Jose!"

"*Si, mi general,*" answered the jailer, coming forward from the doorway where he had been lounging.

"Take the prisoner back to his cell, until it is decided what is to be done with him."

Dick wheeled about and accompanied his jailer without another word. He still felt sure there was some terrible mistake that would soon be righted.

As the cell door opened and Dick entered, the Chinaman looked up at him with some curiosity. When Jose had gone away the yellow man broke out with:

“ You plenty lucky no got throat cut yet. No matter ; you wait. Allee same come soon. You Melican — that settle it. Wait ! ”

“ It looks as if I'd have to wait,” smiled Dick, bitterly. Then, looking curiously about him, and lowering his voice, Dick asked :

“ Chino, by what name do you call yourself ? ”

“ Moy Yuen.”

“ Moy, did it never occur to you that there ought to be some way to escape from a rickety old back-number jail like this ? ”

“ Escape ? ” asked the Chinaman, indolently. “ What good that do ? ”

“ Wouldn't you like to be free ? — back in Manila, or China ? ”

“ Yep ; plenty like,” replied the Chinaman, promptly. “ But allee same, what good like ? Chino get out of here, he not go far. Plenty Filipino see him ; bring him light back. So what good escape ? Maybe Chino get his throat cut, allee same Melican, allee same you.”

“ There's no use in trying to interest this fellow in a scheme of escape,” muttered Dick to himself. “ It strikes him as unnecessary

trouble. But I'll keep my eyes open in my own case."

Moy Yuen soon exemplified how little the matter of getting out interested him by sprawling himself upon the hard stone floor and going into sound, snoring sleep. Dick examined his surroundings thoughtfully. The door offered no possibilities, since he knew too little about locks to have any hope of being able to pick one. On either side of this cell were other ones. The back of the cell Dick believed to be identical with the wall of the jail. It was composed of mortar and a peculiar kind of building-block much in use in the Philippines — a block made up of small stones, shells, and mortar pressed into shape. The mortar, especially between the blocks, was so old and crumbly that Dick believed the simplest kind of an implement, backed by patience, would suffice to pick it out.

"But if this is the back of the jail, that won't do either," reflected the young prisoner. "As we came in I remember seeing a guard pacing along the side. If there's a guard on at night — and there must be — it would be next to im-

possible to get out without making myself a mark for Mauser bullets."

As for the implement, Dick felt in his pockets to see what the searching soldiers had left him of his belongings. He found nothing but a folding button-hook. Still, even this, with proper use, might be sufficient to work out the mortar. At this time of the day he could do nothing but wait — and think.

How blissfully Moy snored! Whatever fate held in store for that Chino, as Chinese are called in Spanish, Moy did not propose to spoil his health worrying about it. With true Chinese philosophy he made the best of the present.

"I wish I could sleep like that," fidgetted Dick. "It would do me good, for I can't remember to have ever felt so used up and worn out in my life. But I'm afraid sleep is out of the question for a good many hours — I'm too nervous."

He would have liked to get up and walk, but the prostrate form of the slumbering Moy lay across the floor in such fashion that the boy could not take two steps without danger of step-

ping on the Chino. He varied the monotony of sitting by standing awhile; then, glad to resume his seat, he let his head fall into his hands. He was aroused, some time later, by the soft footsteps of Jose.

“Wake up, you lazy Chino dog!” admonished the jailer, showing his face through the bars. Thus ordered, Moy sat up, rubbed his almond eyes, and then got slowly up on his bench. Unlocking the door, Jose entered.

“Supper enough for two dogs,” announced Jose, unfeelingly, holding out two strips of green leaf from the banana palm. On each bit of leaf was a pat of cooked rice. Moy snatched at his with the greed of a famishing dog. Dick took the bit of food offered him more deliberately, though hardly less glad to get it, for he had eaten nothing since morning. Moy made two mouthfuls of his food; Dick swallowed his share in four.

“That’s not bad,” smiled Dick. “What else have you, Jose?”

“Water,” said Jose, in a surly tone.

“Can I have no more rice?”

“Not until to-morrow. What do you think —

that the Filipino republic has nothing to do with its money but to feed *Americanos*?"

"Let that pass, then," replied Dick, with pretended blitheness. "You said something about water. Can I have some?"

Jose stood glaring at the boy for some moments, but Dick returned the stare unconcernedly. Jose then stepped back into the corridor, reappearing with a rusty tin in which there was about a quart of rather dirty-looking water. But it was no time to be particular, so Carson, raising the tin to his lips, drank until the jailer snatched the tin away.

"Is the water supply limited, too?" queried the boy, in a good deal of surprise.

"For Americans, yes," was the answer. "Here, Chino, you may have all you want."

And the yellow prisoner, snatching the tin, greedily finished its contents.

"In the morning," said Jose, once more glaring at our hero, "you will be ready to get up at daylight. I think I will set you to sweep out the cells on this floor, and clean the corridor."

The insolence of the jailer's tone stung Carson to

the quick. He did not relish being talked to in such fashion by a fellow so inferior as Jose.

"Oh, there's all night to think about it," retorted Dick lightly. "I'll let you know in the morning whether I am willing to do any of your housework for you."

"Come, then," requested Jose. "I want to show you what happened to two who thought they would do as they pleased. It may change your mind. You come too, Chino."

Out of the cell and down to the rear end of the corridor the jailer led them. He waved one hand toward the barred window.

"Look out into the river, and see what you shall see," he directed.

Dick saw, and turned sick with disgust and loathing. Moy Yuen took a peep, and his face instantly took on a tint of sickly green. The poor Chino's legs shook so that he could hardly stand.

On the surface of the water lay two Chinamen, nearly nude. Lashed back to back, they were bloated and hideous-looking. Each had had his throat cut, great gaping wounds showing. From their bodies ropes ran to trees on either side of



the narrow river, or creek. Their bloated bodies floated motionless on the water, a silent, ghastly warning to all passers-by on the bridge close at hand.

“Those two rascals had notions something like yours, señor,” exclaimed the jailer, as Dick turned his face away from the fearful sight. “They were willing to work, but when told that they must work without being paid for it, they refused. Well, you saw what happened to them! The same punishment awaits every stubborn prisoner. So, when I tell you that you will be set to work in the morning, you understand that you will do the work.”

With which grim remark, Jose motioned them back to their cell. Dick went without a word, white with anger and disgust. Poor Moy groped at walls and cell doors to steady himself. He seated himself on his former bench, with eyes staring affrightedly ahead and teeth chattering. Jose smiled grimly at the pair, mistaking Dick's pallor for fright, locked the door, and left them.

As dark came on, Moy's terror increased. Incoherent appeals in Chinese escaped him. He was praying to Buddha.

Hour after hour went by. Save for a dim oil-lamp, burning near the stairway, there was no light on that floor of the carcel. Every now and then the Filipino who acted as Jose's night relief came gliding through the corridor as still as a ghost, to make sure that the prisoners were all secure. In the stillness of the jail the gay chatter of the natives in the street outside was plainly audible. There was the sound of a band playing up in the Plaza. At length even that sound ceased. By degrees the street sounds became less, ceasing utterly towards eleven o'clock. Still Dick Carson sat on his bench, thinking, thinking, thinking, hoping that drowsiness would soon come to his relief. All was still outside, now, save for the occasional hail of a sentry to some belated passer-by.

Moy, who had been quiet, but sleepless, for an hour, now broke into another long string of supplications addressed to Buddha. When Dick finally knelt down that night it was to a very different God that he prayed for courage and succor. He fell asleep, to be aroused a little later by a soft pressure against his body.

Stupid at first, Dick lay with his eyes half

open, but not moving. Then, his eyes gradually becoming accustomed to the darkness, he discovered that his Chinese fellow-prisoner was softly rifling his pockets.

“It’s no use, Moy,” laughed Dick. “Those rascals downstairs didn’t leave me anything for you to take.”

With a grunt, in which there was neither confusion nor shame, Moy Yuen drew back, laid himself upon the floor, and began a series of premature snores.

Thus aroused, our hero did not find it an easy matter to get to sleep again. Tired as he was, the stone floor made such an uncomfortable bed that he turned, twisted, and shifted many and many a time in the vain effort to find the proverbial “soft spot.” It was of no use. He had just resigned himself to lying awake for the rest of the night when consciousness faded and he dropped off into deep, dreamless sleep.

For a long time Dick’s steady, full breathing showed how fully nature had come to his relief. At last, however, he began to toss in his sleep. Dreams had come.

At first he went over, step by step, with horrible unrealness, his experiences on that memorable railway ride from Manila to Malolos. In the dream-version of his arrest he found himself fleeing frantically down the street from Barasoain to Malolos with hundreds of Filipinos, all brandishing knives, in full pursuit, while the lieutenant charged with his delivery at the carcel raced after fugitive and pursuers, calling upon his captive to stop and surrender himself. But a very lively and life-like fear of those ghastly dream-knives kept the dreaming boy in continued flight.

From that, his dreams took him into the office of the provost-general, downstairs. Here the actual scene, too, became much magnified and distorted in the land of Nod. Dick found himself on trial, with dozens of natives all testifying wildly that they had seen this American boy kill their beloved president, Aguinaldo. His guilt seemed proven in an instant. It remained only to decide upon his fate. It must be something peculiarly awful. All the witnesses took a hand in proposing.

“Heat a big kettle of cocoanut oil and boil him alive in it,” suggested one.

“No, no! Put him in a hole in the ground, and toss in after him four cobras that have first been made fighting mad. Let them sink their poisonous fangs into him, and thus avenge his deed.”

Other suggestions followed that were even more horrible. Dick, quite conscious in his dream that he had committed no such act as that charged against him, tried in vain to make himself heard. The tossing body of this dreaming young sleeper became bathed in cold perspiration caused by the fearful mental pictures in which he was the chief and doomed actor.

A change, ever so slight, came in the dream. It seemed that his fate had been decided. Just what it was the boy did not understand. He realized only that it was something awful — the most fearful torture that these enraged Filipinos could invent.

Then the crowd rushed upon him. In the midst of the tumult a voice as of one in authority broke in. Obedient to that command, the frantic crowd

stood back for an instant, and Herr Schwarz appeared on the dream-scene. His face wore a look of evil mockery.

“Well, boy,” said this new dream-arrival, “so you see what you have come to. Do you remember how you refused me a great favor? It is in my power, now, to save you from this crazy multitude. I could do it easily, if I wanted. But I refuse. As you declined to serve me, so I decline to serve you. Go to your fate, knowing that you have brought it upon yourself, and that you deserve no sympathy!”

Then Dick, in his dream, threw off the nightmare of fear that had held him helpless even to move.

“You are the cause of all this, Herr Schwarz!” he charged.

The German's face took on an even subtler look than before, as he retorted:

“Even so. You preferred to be my enemy!”

Then, as visions do vanish in dreams, when their mission is fulfilled, Herr Schwarz faded from the scene. But the Filipinos still remained, their fury not one whit abated. They rushed upon him.

He felt himself borne onward by the moving throng.

Struggling desperately, Dick suddenly awoke, wet with chill perspiration, shaking in every bone of his body. For a few moments he could hardly realize that the dreadful scene was merely the fancy of his fagged brain.

"Gracious!" muttered the boy, sitting up as soon as he found the strength to do so, and wiping his wet forehead and face on his sleeve. "That was a terror! I don't believe I care about going to sleep again, if I'm to be in for a night of such stuff as that."

In the darkness he could just make out the figure of Moy Yuen, who lay on his side, with knees almost drawn up to his chin. The Mongol was surely enough asleep this time, his breath coming and going in deep, regular gusts, not a move, not a tremor, not so much as a sigh fluttering through the lips of the wretched Chino.

"That's one of the beauties of being a coolie," thought depressed Dick. "With such a stupid brain as his, he hasn't imagination enough to go through such a fearful dream as mine."

Through the boy's mind at this moment, with the mocking dream-face of Herr Schwarz still so fresh in his memory, flashed the words with which Mr. Taylor had warned him against the German.

“Merciful Heaven!” uttered Dick, starting suddenly to his feet and speaking half aloud. “I begin to see through it all. That fellow who called himself Tillerman was a decoy. That bill against a man who does not live here — that pass which was good enough until I reached Malolos — its disappearance and my arrest. Somehow, Schwarz is at the bottom of it all!”



## CHAPTER VI

## MALOLOS HAS TIDINGS OF WAR'S FIRST SHOT

DICK expected his fate, one way or the other, to be speedily decided.

In this his expectation was not realized. Thursday and Friday he spent in his cell, except for the brief spells that Jose required him for cleaning-work in the corridor. This work Dick sensibly concluded to perform without demur. To have resisted would have been to invite punishment which he was powerless to avert. Jose was not a hard or cruel taskmaster; the Filipino jailer was too indolent to be harsh unless provoked.

But on Saturday morning Jose was at the cell door early.

“Come, Chino! Come, Americano!” he murmured. “Rouse yourselves. Here is breakfast, and after you have eaten it you are to be sent out to earn it. So be quick with your meal.”

The door was unlocked. Each received his al-

lowance of a small pat of rice on a banana leaf. Each was then allowed to step out into the hall for his drink of water.

“Now you will go downstairs,” ordered Jose, “and join the gang that is going out to work.”

Dick and Moy Yuen hastened along the corridor, down the stairs. After so much tedious confinement they were glad of the chance to get out of doors.

In the corridor below they found a group of some two-score chattering Chinamen, under guard of ten soldiers and a sergeant, all awaiting the same order to start for the place of employment. With the arrival of the two upstairs prisoners the whole lot were made to form, two and two, Dick and Moy Yuen bringing up the rear. The soldiers were distributed along the line in such a way as to keep the prisoners in order and nip any attempt at escape with a bullet.

“*Vamos!*” (go) ordered the sergeant, and the procession filed into the street. Across the bridge over the little river they marched, out to the west of Malolos on the road to Paombong. At a distance of a quarter of a mile from the jail the body

of prisoners was wheeled to the left, marching in under the shade of a big banana grove. The guard was posted at the edges of the grove, to prevent any escapes, and then the sergeant, acting as a taskmaster, set the prisoners at work.

At one side of the grove stood a pile of jointed, sun-dried bamboo. These pieces were some thirty feet in length and of an average diameter of about four inches. The joints occurred at intervals of about eighteen inches, and on the inside of the bamboo, between these joints, was a hard, pith-like growth, which effectually divided each bamboo trunk into so many air-tight compartments.

“You see that pile?” asked the sergeant, directing attention to the bamboo. “There is material enough there to make several thousand canteens. That shall be your work, each day, until the pile is gone. Now I will show you how to do it. The dog who dares to be lazy shall miss his supper to-night.”

Picking out two of the Chinamen, the sergeant directed each to bring a bamboo pole to the centre of the grove. This done, he provided each with a saw, ordering them to cut up the bamboo in

such fashion that each piece should terminate in one end, at the closed joint, and, at the other end, some three inches beyond the joint. To each of the other prisoners he gave a knife.

"It is said that you Americanos are very lazy," sneered the sergeant, turning to Dick. "Well, we shall see whether you will dare to be now. Your work is to be done like this."

Picking up one of the short lengths of bamboo which the Chinamen had just sawed off, the sergeant began to whittle at the end that protruded beyond the joint. He cut it away to a scoop-like affair, terminating in an end small enough to fit the mouth. Then, with the knife, just below the scoop he cut a small opening through the pith. This, with the addition of a narrow shoulder-strap of cotton tacked on, formed the canteen in which the Filipino soldier carried his water while fighting, or on the march. It carried water enough to last the little brown fighter nearly all day. But with the strap the prisoners had nothing to do. Each soldier was left to put that on for himself.

The model that the sergeant thus quickly manufactured was passed from hand to hand, that each

of the prisoners might see what was required. It was a simple idea that did not take long to master.

“Now, to work with you, and woe to the lazy!” cried the sergeant.

Amid the squeaking of rusty saws and the low-toned chug-chug of knives cutting through the bamboo the work proceeded. The sergeant, squatting in the centre, where he could watch them all, smoked an innumerable number of cigarettes, watching his slaves through his half-closed eyes. But he was far from permitting himself to go to sleep, that inexorable little Filipino. As speedily as he detected one of the prisoners lagging for a moment he would spring up, rush over to the offender, and lay a half dozen stinging blows with a green bamboo stick across the poor fellow's back. In this matter the sergeant was over-zealous. Dick, pausing to wipe away the perspiration that streamed from his brow into his eyes, received his half dozen strokes in a twinkling. An hour later he received another half dozen no more merited. Each time the boy flushed, trembled, and meditated springing upon his cruel taskmaster. But, realiz-

ing the hopelessness of such rebellion, he controlled himself and took his chastisement as meekly as he could.

By noon there were hundreds of canteens finished and stacked up after the fashion of a good old American wood-pile. At this hour some Filipino women appeared, bringing food for the soldiers, who ate it while keeping an eye over the prisoners.

“Well, what are you staring at, you dogs?” demanded the sergeant, angrily, after gulping down a slice of fish. “Do you expect to be fed? Be thankful if you have something to eat to-night.”

But, an hour later, finding that his slaves were weakening without water to cool their parched lips, the sergeant relented enough to permit four Chinos, under guard of a soldier, to carry earthen urns to the nearest stream, and bring them back full of water. Thereafter the sergeant watched to see who stopped work too often to go to a water jar. Such an offence, even if a fancied one on the part of the taskmaster, was sure to meet swift punishment with the bamboo.

Save for a drink of water about once an hour,

the sergeant did not permit his compulsory workmen to idle away a moment. It was a fearful test of endurance, for the temperature, even under the shade of the trees, stood above a hundred degrees during the middle of the day. There were spots where the sun filtered through the leaves of the banana trees and shone direct upon the toilers. Yet to attempt to shift much in position was sure to bring down a shower of blows from that terrible bamboo stick, a dozen times replenished through the day. The Chinamen, inured to toil and heat, stood it fairly well. As for Dick, accustomed to spend the hottest hours of the tropical day in the cool recesses of an office, with a laborless *siesta* (resting or nap time) from noon to two o'clock, this hot, unrelenting toil, without food and with insufficient water, became acute torture before the day was over.

By night-time more than two thousand of these bamboo canteens had been manufactured. Just before dark the sergeant, after collecting the saws and knives, re-formed the procession, marching the prisoners back to the carcel. Dick and Moy Yuen were locked up in their former cell. Jose

served them with the same pats of rice, reënforced with a little water.

The next day was Sunday, the fifth of February. If our hero had hoped for rest on this Christian day of rest he was doomed to disappointment. Soon after daylight, following a hasty breakfast, he and Moy were ordered downstairs. Here they found the same group of prisoners. The march of the former day was reënacted. But Dick's sharp eye noted a change in the demeanor of the sergeant. That little brown man appeared greatly excited. The same excitement was noticeable in his men in a no less degree. Out in the streets the native population swarmed. There were cheers and "*vivas*." Knots of Tagalo men and women stood at every corner, talking in their own dialect, and all speaking excitedly. They even cheered the detail of soldiers escorting the prisoners. Filipino flags were four times as much in evidence on the buildings as they had been the day before.

"What in the world is up?" wondered the American boy.

He was not long left in doubt. Upon arrival at



the grove, after the prisoners had been set to work duplicating the task of the day before, the sergeant, looking mightily proud, came over and squatted on the ground close to Dick.

“Well,” began the little brown man, banteringly, “it seems that your Americano soldiers are not so brave as they bragged themselves to be!”

“No?” asked Dick, wondering what was coming next.

“They are no match for our soldiers who fight for the Filipino republic.”

“So I have heard your people say before,” was Dick’s dry rejoinder.

“Well, it has been proven,” cried the sergeant, gleefully. “Last night we tested them. Last night the first shot was fired! Then a volley. The war has begun. It is almost over.”

Bamboo and knife fell from Dick Carson’s suddenly nerveless fingers. He stared searchingly into the sergeant’s eyes, where an exulting look flashed.

“Bosh!” said Dick, simply.

“You do not believe what I tell you?” demanded the Filipino.

“No; I know the American soldier altogether too

well to believe any such stuff as you are telling me. The rebellion may have begun, but if that is true you will see American soldiers here within two or three days."

"Very likely," jeered the sergeant, "but they will come as prisoners. Oh, our great presidente had many more soldiers than you Americanos thought for! If you do not believe me, did you not notice how happy our people are to-day? Our great victory is in everybody's mouth."

"Victory?" repeated Carson, incredulously.

"Yes, victory. Since you will enjoy the news so much, I will read it to you."

From under his soiled blue and white jacket the sergeant drew out a copy of the native paper printed in Malolos. It was printed in Spanish, and the great flaring head-lines, in which the word "*victoria*" was conspicuous, covered half of the first page.

"It was what was to be expected," said the sergeant. "Our great and brave army was in Manila last night within an hour after the fighting began."

"In Manila?" echoed Dick.

"Certainly, for the Americanos had not only our



“THERE ARE NO AMERICANS LEFT OUTSIDE THE WALLED CITY”



troops to fight. The Filipino populace in the city rose and assailed the Americanos from the rear. Oh, our brave fellows had a splendid time cutting the Americanos to pieces! In one stone house they captured thirty Americano soldiers. They were hacked to pieces with knives. And our troops are parading the streets of Manila to-day — that is to say, those who are not keeping the remaining American soldiers penned in the Walled City.”

Dick stared in amaze at the sergeant, who continued to glance over the paper and to talk with the air of a man who believes every word he utters.

“There are no Americans left outside of the Walled City,” resumed the sergeant, gloating over Dick’s distress. “If they attempt to come out they will be cut to pieces as they were last night. Moreover, we have thousands of Chinos at work digging mines under the Walled City. By to-morrow those mines will be in readiness. General Otis will be ordered to surrender, with the two or three regiments of troops that he has left. If he does not, then the Walled City will be blown up, and the last of the Americans destroyed.”

There could be no doubt that the sergeant

believed all he read in the paper. It was true that the rebellion had opened, and the first battle had been fought, but the result had been a disastrous defeat for the Filipinos, who had been driven to a greater distance from the city, with the loss of hundreds of their comrades. The natives in Manila and the Tagals on the firing-line knew the truth. But along the towns all the way from Caloocan to San Fernando the most exuberant tales of a Filipino victory had been circulated among natives only too glad to believe the falsehoods.

“Our presidente is a great leader!” cried the sergeant, his eyes glowing and snapping. “There is not another in all the world like Don Emilio Aguinaldo.”

To this, two of the soldiers of the guard who had drawn near replied with cries of approval. Dick hardly knew what to think. He knew how numerous the insurgent army was; knew, also, how many thousands of the little brown men in Manila would take huge delight in attacking the Americans from the rear. At the thought of the Malays looting the city, burning and pillaging, the boy felt heart-sick. The thought of American

women and children being ruthlessly butchered by the insurgents made him turn hot and cold in swift succession.

"It is all the fault of the Americans," spoke up one of the listening insurgent soldiers. "They would not go away and leave us in peace. They laughed at our wish to be a free people. Very well; we have answered them by speaking in blood!"

"I don't believe it," said Dick, bluntly, after some moments of thought.

"Don't believe what?" queried the sergeant and the soldiers in one breath.

"I don't believe one word of this yarn of victory. There may have been a fight, but if there was your insurgent army was badly beaten."

"That is a lie," said the sergeant, wrathfully, flourishing his paper; "as this journal shows."

"It's absurd," ridiculed Dick, "the very idea of the insurgents in occupation of Manila after having fired on the Stars and Stripes! Why, under those circumstances you couldn't stay in Manila one hour."

The sergeant laughed heartily at this specimen

of what he considered Americano bombast. When he could speak once more, he demanded:

“Why not?”

“*Because Dewey and his fleet would blow Manila off the face of the earth!*”

Dick Carson fairly hurled this answer at the listening insurgents. It struck like a bombshell, demolishing the house of cards which they had erected out of their hopes.

“Oh, well,” growled the sergeant, after a few moments, “when the time comes to deal with your Dewey we shall know what to do with him. As for you, dog, go on with your work, and make up for all the time you have lost in talking, or you shall feel a tenfold dose of my bamboo stick over your back.”

Dick picked up the bamboo and the knife, resuming his task. The two soldiers returned to their posts, kicking a Chino or two on their way. As for the sergeant, he smoked a number of cigarettes in rapid succession, taking occasional peeps at the paper which had previously given him such comfort. He looked graver and more thoughtful by this time.



Some one, passing along the road on horseback, stopped opposite the grove. Dick, bending over his work, was conscious that a pair of eyes were closely studying his face. So close and ardent did that gaze soon become that Dick was forced to look up at the newcomer.

It was Herr Schwarz!

## CHAPTER VII

## HERR SCHWARZ BETRAYS HIMSELF

“THAT scoundrel here?” muttered Dick, with a start of surprise.

Though Herr Schwarz's look was as bland as oil, there was something in his air that made the American boy shiver.

Perceiving that he was observed, Herr Schwarz came quickly forward, his face expressing, now, the utmost concern.

“My young friend Carson?” he cried. “Can it be possible, and a prisoner? Indeed, this is a sorry sight for my eyes, for though you once played me a little trick, I hold you no ill will.”

Dick, whose face had been paling and flushing by turns, looked at the other with a penetrating scrutiny that plainly put the German ill at his ease. Having finished his glance, our hero, without a word, picked up his bamboo and knife once more, and, though his fingers trembled slightly, resumed work.

“I am astonished — amazed, to find you here,” went on the German, but Dick only whittled the faster, while Herr Schwarz, standing over him, unrebuked by the sergeant, tried to make out what was passing in the boy’s mind.

When the situation had become insupportable by reason of the long-continued silence, the sergeant held up his newspaper with its flaring headlines, and observed:

“The prisoner does not believe the glorious news. He cannot be convinced that the Americans have been defeated.”

“It is true, nevertheless,” replied Herr Schwarz, gravely.

No more was needed to break Dick’s silence. Looking up with an ironical sneer on his lips, he demanded:

“Herr Schwarz, may I ask you one question?”

“Two, if you like,” replied the German, blandly.

“You declare that the Filipinos won last night?”

“Assuredly they did; and, by this time, Gen-

eral Otis must have capitulated Manila, including the Walled City. If he has not done so it will be the worse for all Americans."

"You assert that to be the truth?" insisted Dick.

"Of course."

"How did the American defeat happen?"

"Your American troops were volunteers. They were no match for the Filipinos, many of whom served as regulars under Spain. America has suffered through having volunteers in the field."

"For the first time in American history, then," retorted Dick. "The American volunteer has always shown himself to be the superior of any other troops in the world."

Herr Schwarz gave his shoulders a brief Teutonic shrug.

"Have it as you will," he said, indifferently. "You asked for the news and I have given it to you."

"Herr Schwarz, just one more question."

"I will answer it with all the pleasure in the world," replied the German, his face beaming with pretended friendliness.

*“Does it hurt you to tell the truth?”*

“What do you mean by that?” demanded the German, hotly.

“My question was plain enough, wasn’t it? You don’t like me. I stood in the way of your rascality once, and you have not forgiven me. You tell me things that are not true about the defeat of the American soldier, in the hope of hurting my feelings and causing me to feel more dejected than ever.”

“I hurt your feelings?” echoed Herr Schwarz, in a voice of great surprise. “My dear young man, I have no such unworthy idea. I deeply deplore your suffering and humiliation.”

Yet underlying this avowal, sincere as it was probably meant to sound, there was such an undercurrent of mockery that Dick would have been blind not to have perceived it.

Rising, he looked the German fully and contemptuously in the eyes. Herr Schwarz took a step backward, seeing which, Dick disdainfully tossed away the knife with which he had been working. As the conversation had been in English, the sergeant, not understanding a word of

it, had sat looking curiously on. Now he, too, arose, and watched, with his bamboo switch ready.

“Herr Schwarz,” demanded the boy, “have you any curiosity to know what is passing in my mind?”

“Well?” demanded the German, slowly.

“You hated me because I interfered with your dishonest work. You resolved to punish me. Well, you have succeeded, since it was you who brought about my visit to Malolos and my arrest and torment.”

“I?” echoed Herr Schwarz, stepping back and staring hard at the boy.

“Yes, you! And why deny it? You can have nothing to fear from me now. I am helpless to escape. Why did you come down to this spot, if it were not to see me and to exult in my helplessness? Well, are you satisfied? To see me a prisoner among these Filipinos, helpless and treated like a dog, must satisfy your highest ideas of revenge. Herr Schwarz, you must feel that you are truly one of nature’s noblemen!”

“Ach! You are too severe, my young friend,

with one who sympathizes with you, and who would be delighted to serve you."

Again there was that undercurrent of mockery that quickly struck Dick Carson's ear. Turning upon his heel in cool contempt, he walked over to where his knife lay, picked it up, turned his back upon the German, and resumed his seat and work. But Herr Schwarz was not yet through with his sport. There was a glint of delight, now, in his narrow little eyes, as, winking at the sergeant, he once more approached and stood over the American boy, who was swelling with righteous indignation.

"My young friend," began the German, jeeringly.

"Haven't you and I said enough to each other?" questioned Carson, not looking up, but going on with his work.

"My young friend, you are the living symbol of the pride that is its own destruction," went on Herr Schwarz, seating himself on the ground and lighting a big black cigar. "When I first saw you here I was sorry for you. It was in my mind that perhaps I could be of service to you. But your words and your manner rather drive that idea

out of my head. I think now that I shall leave you here to suffer."

"Just as you intended to do from the first," retorted Dick, bitterly. "I knew too much of your plans. You decided to get me out of the way. In the present condition of things in Manila that was easy. A man whom you sent, and who called himself Tillerman, induced me to come here on a pretended errand for which I was to receive big pay. I came, was arrested, and am well out of your way. I ought to have been sharp enough to have seen it in time. Mr. Taylor warned me to be on the lookout against some just such miserable trick as this."

"He did, eh?" queried Herr Schwarz, opening his narrow eyes a little wider and half grinning. "Go on!"

"I think I have said all I want to say," rejoined Carson, not deigning to turn around and look at his tormentor.

"You always make the mistake of being uncivil to me," protested Herr Schwarz, in a bantering tone. "You made that mistake in Manila — eh?"

"If you call my refusal to become a scoundrel



incivility, certainly I was guilty of it. I would do the same thing again."

"Then you have learned no lesson, eh?" demanded Herr Schwarz, harshly.

At this Dick dropped bamboo and knife once more, wheeling around on his seat to look triumphantly at his questioner.

"Ah! Then you admit at last, Herr Schwarz, that you were and are at the bottom of my trouble?"

Herr Schwarz bit his lip in vexation at being thus easily trapped by the boy. Next, as if seeing a further opportunity of torturing his young victim, he asked:

"Well, suppose I do admit it — what then?"

"I don't see that anything remains to be said," retorted Dick. "You admit yourself to be too great a rascal for an honest man to talk to."

At this Herr Schwarz purpled with anger. He arose, raised his fist, and advanced upon the boy. But the vigilant sergeant darted in before him, laying over Carson's shoulders a half dozen sharp cuts with the bamboo. Dick stood it without flinching, though the pain made him writhe inwardly. The German bowed to the sergeant.

"Thank you, my friend," he said, gruffly. Then, turning to Dick, he added:

"You see, boy, that I am not one to be trifled with here in Malolos."

"I notice that," replied Dick, quietly, as, smarting under the cuts, he sat down once more and took up his work.

"Had you been polite enough, I might have helped you. As it is, sergeant, you will do me a great favor by laying the stick over this young fellow's shoulders as often as seems necessary."

By way of reply the sergeant saluted. Herr Schwarz stood regarding his young enemy with wicked satisfaction. He lighted his cigar, which had gone out in the excitement, and smoked contemplatively.

"Bah!" remarked the German at last. "I can't waste any more time on such an impolite young cub as you are. Besides, I have more important business on hand than talking with you."

"Business?" repeated Dick, now turning and looking curiously into his enemy's face.

"Of course," growled the German. "What is there so strange in that?"

“Perhaps nothing,” answered Dick, quietly. “At the same time, it seems a little queer to me that after the Filipinos and the Americans have begun war you should come from the city of the one to the city of the other—and on business!”

“It is by business that I live,” said Herr Schwarz, coolly.

“Are you sure that your business would bear the light of an investigation by the United States Government?” was the quick question. Dick was now closely scanning his enemy’s face.

“What do you mean?” blurted Herr Schwarz, taking the cigar out of his mouth and looking very disconcerted.

Dick rose that he might better face the German. His eyes flashed with honest anger and scorn. Matters were fast approaching a crisis. Moy Yuen, who had heard the whole conversation from his seat close by, now rose and passed with an armful of canteens. One of these he dexterously dropped on the boy’s foot. But Dick Carson was too much aroused to heed the warning. He gazed into the German’s eyes until the latter began to show signs of discomfort.

“I mean,” said Dick, speaking slowly, “that I am just beginning to understand what has brought you to Malolos. It was not merely to see me, and to gloat over my misfortune. You say you have business here? That business is something underhanded, in connection with the Filipino government.”

“Bah!” said Herr Schwarz, regaining his assurance.

“You are living in Manila,” went on Dick, spiritedly, “under the protection of the United States Government, a pretended friend of that government. Yet you are betraying that government and giving aid of some kind to the Filipinos!”

“Stop that talk!” cried Herr Schwarz, angrily.

“So it hurts, does it? I have driven the truth home? You might as well admit, Herr Schwarz, that you are engaged up here in a kind of business that is little short of treason—which *would* be treason if you were a citizen of the United States.”

Herr Schwarz had at first turned crimson with wrath; from that his face passed to a deep pallor. Dick, on whom these changes of color were not lost, felt that he had hit the truth exactly. The German

seemed terribly ill at ease. This was only a passing condition, however. He soon recovered his courage and his impudence.

“Even supposing that what you say is true, what would happen, my young friend?”

“If it should become known in Manila,” hinted Dick, “do you suppose there would be any danger of your being shot by a file of soldiers?”

“Shot?” stammered Herr Schwarz, turning pale again. “Oh, what nonsense you talk, my young friend!”

“Perhaps I do,” rejoined Carson, picking up a new piece of bamboo, and whittling away as if for dear life. “Just the same, I’ve an idea that you’d pay half of your fortune sooner than have General Otis know that you have been up here in Malolos to-day, walking about as if you were quite at home.”

Herr Schwarz uttered something under his breath. He had lost his air of mockery and gloating, and from that passed to an air of persuasion. He put out one hand with a gesture of denial, saying:

“My young friend, you are over-excitable. You make much out of nothing. There is nothing

in my business here that I should object to having the Americans know."

But Dick Carson looked highly incredulous.

"Oh, if I could only get a hint of your visit here, and your words, to General Otis!" he cried earnestly.

In an instant the German flared up. Turning on his heel, he took a step away.

"You never will!" retorted Herr Schwarz, looking back an instant over his shoulder. The three words rang with menace. As if afraid to trust himself to say more, the German walked hurriedly away.

"Well," snarled the sergeant, bringing his bamboo down in a vicious blow over the boy's shoulders, "are you going to waste the whole day? You shall have nothing to eat to-night."

Two more sharp cuts, which it would have been folly to resist, caused Dick Carson, without turning to look after the rapidly vanishing German, to sit down upon the ground and resume work with redoubled vigor.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE FARCE OF TRIAL

DICK CARSON'S first feeling, after the abrupt close of the interview, was one of elation. He had tricked the German into making admissions which that worthy must now greatly regret. Our hero had proven, moreover, the correctness of his own suspicion that Herr Schwarz was the author of his misfortunes, and had gone even further in forcing the German to admit that he was an agent of, or had underhanded dealings with, the Filipino government.

Second thought, which came while the boy whittled away with redoubled energy, was not so reassuring. Had he not angered a man who could make his present bad situation trebly unbearable?

Watching his chance, Moy Yuen, with the most stolid countenance in the world, found chance to pause close to the American boy.

"You plenty fool," grunted the Chinaman.

“ You talk much ; makee Dutchman plenty mad. He big man, too, with Filipinos. What he say, they do. You catch plenty bad fix, now ! ”

With which sinister prophecy, delivered in the lowest tone audible, Moy Ynen trotted off to his work, leaving Dick a prey to the conviction that he had, as the Chinaman had hinted, talked altogether too much.

Had there been any possible doubt on the subject, the sergeant would have effectually dispelled it. Every few minutes he took occasion to vent his spite on our hero, who, knowing how futile it would be to remonstrate, suffered in heroic silence.

An hour later four Filipino soldiers marched to the grove under command of an officer. The latter called the sergeant aside, whispered to him, and displayed a paper. There was a short, whispered conference, after which the sergeant strode over to our hero.

“ Well,” announced the little Filipino, roughly, “ you are wanted.”

“ All right,” answered Dick, rising and putting down his implements. “ By whom ? ”



“Dog, it is not for you to ask questions, was the brutal reply. “Follow me, and keep your mouth closed.”

Dick submitted to being led toward the squad, who silently surrounded him. At the command the squad stepped off, the sergeant accompanying it. Dick wasted no time on useless conjecture as to what this latest move meant. Whatever it was, he was satisfied that it boded no good to him. As the squad reëntered Malolos, passing through throngs of people joyous over their supposed victory of the night before, the American boy again became the butt of popular derision and abuse.

At the bridge over the little stream that had to be passed before reaching the carcel, a mob stopped the guard. The leader of the mob was a short, thick-set Filipino with a deeply pitted face. His trousers came only to his knees; below he was barefooted. Over his muscular torso there was nothing but a thin cotton shirt, open in front, while the absence of sleeves revealed a pair of muscular arms. In his right hand he carried a short, keen-edged bolo. Many of the

men in the mob behind him were similarly armed, while some carried merely sticks of bamboo.

“Come, make way, my brothers,” cried the Filipino officer, impatiently.

“We have a favor to ask,” replied the mob’s leader, coolly.

“A favor?”

“Yes; give us the prisoner.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed the officer.

“But I have just learned that I had two brothers killed by the Americanos in the fight last night.”

“And I my father — the best of fathers!” cried a young Filipino, vociferously.

“And I a brother!”

“And I a brother and two cousins!”

From a score or more came the quick enumeration of relatives slain the night before by American bullets. It was a scene of babel, the mob surging slowly but doggedly closer to the white prisoner, despite the menacing bayonets of the guard.

“You see, lieutenant,” insisted the mob’s leader, sullenly, “the best and wisest thing you can do

is to give the prisoner to us. Many of us have suffered losses. By doing as we will with this Americano some of that bitterness can be wiped out. Give him to us."

"Impossible," repeated the lieutenant.

"Then," retorted the leader of the mob, looking backward over his shoulder with a ferocious grin, "we can make the matter simple for you. We can take the prisoner without your consent."

"Yes, yes! Take the Americano! He is ours!" shouted the brown ragamuffins, those in the rear pressing forward so determinedly that those in front were pushed forward upon the very points of the bayonets.

"Sergeant, look after the prisoner!" ordered the lieutenant, with a resolution that had hardly been looked for. "Men, cock your pieces! Take aim!"

"No, no!" uttered the mob, in hoarse remonstrance. "We are Filipino citizens, and cannot be treated in this way. If the soldiers dare to fire, not one of them shall live after it!"

The mob by this time numbered more than forty men. There had been a sprinkling of women

at the rear at first, but on the order to aim, they hastily scampered away. Not so with the men. They were Malays, fierce and reckless where passion ruled. They yielded not one inch before the glittering muzzles that would soon send a flight of bullets through them.

"You see, lieutenant," cried the leader, exultantly, "my friends are not to be scared by a handful of soldiers. Come, give up your prisoner, and save yourself to fight against the enemy."

"I have no love for the Americano, but I am acting under the orders of the provost-general," replied the lieutenant, firmly. "I know who most of you are, and it will be worse for you if you do not at once get out of my way. Therefore, step back, and let us pass, or every one of you shall be tried for treason against the republic."

But the mob was not yet in a mood to give way. They stood sullenly still, some of them furtively handling their bolos in preparation for a rush. The lieutenant and the leader eyed each other with resolution.

"If they get hold of me, Heaven help me!" quivered Dick.

But the lieutenant's predicament had been witnessed from the carcel. A squad of ten soldiers, formed by twos, with a sergeant at their head, came out of the door on the double quick. Spreading out into a platoon, they charged the crowd from the rear, giving some of the brawlers a slight touch of steel. Finding themselves between two walls of bayonets, the mob wavered for an instant, then called out that they were willing to disperse. The ten soldiers formed at the side of the street to permit the mob's escape, after which Dick Carson was hurried into the carcel, safe on the inside of the guard-line.

"Stand here," ordered the lieutenant, halting Dick in the corridor that led to the provost-general's office. The officer and the sergeant disappeared inside of the office, and it was five minutes before they reappeared.

"Come," said the lieutenant, plucking Dick by the sleeve, and he led our hero into the office.

The provost-general sat behind his big desk. At either side of the same desk sat clerks. There were three or four Filipino officers lounging in the room, besides two soldiers on guard on either side of the provost.

That official, a native apparently not more than thirty years of age, attired in a striped blue and white uniform liberally bedecked with gold lace, looked Dick Carson searchingly over when that young man was halted six feet from his desk.

"So you are not satisfied with the clemency which I had shown you?" demanded the provost, crisply.

"I do not understand you," protested Dick.

"It is a simple matter. On account of your youth I was merciful with you. While you were proven to be an Americano spy, I treated you, as you are a boy only, as a mere prisoner of war. How have you repaid me? By plotting treachery against us!"

"I?" echoed Dick, thunderstruck.

"Yes; you have secretly incited the prisoners with whom you are associated to escape. You tried to persuade them to rise upon the guard, overwhelm them, and make a dash for liberty."

Dick looked utterly confounded, as, indeed, he felt. Knowing how innocent he was of this charge, he could see in it only the venomous malice of Herr Schwarz. His astounded look seemed to give the

provost a good deal of satisfaction, for he observed, snappily :

“Your looks confess all. You do not need to deny the charge.”

“But I do deny it,” uttered Dick, hotly.

“Is the charge true, sergeant?” asked the provost, turning to the non-commissioned officer who had charge of the prisoners.

“It is true, your excellency,” replied the sergeant, bowing. “Quite true. I myself overheard him talking with some of the Chino prisoners !”

Despite his desperate effort to remain cool, Dick Carson could not help turning upon the sergeant, staring at him in astonishment and virtuous indignation.

“You never heard me say anything of the sort,” asserted the boy, defiantly. “You couldn’t, for I never said it.”

“The sergeant is answering me, not you,” broke in the provost, harshly. “Prisoner, do you mean to deny that you would escape if you found a chance to do it?”

“I’d escape in a minute !” rejoined Dick, with

spirit. "What prisoner wouldn't, if he had a good chance?"

"You have condemned yourself," said the provost, coldly. "I do not think there is any more to be said by you. Step back."

The sergeant who had been our hero's accuser now clutched at Carson's sleeve and led him almost to the door before he halted him. Dick gazed at the fellow with lofty disdain.

"Gentlemen," said the provost to the officers near him, "you have heard the testimony. We will now consider what is to be done."

Around the provost gathered the Filipino officers. They talked in whispers.

"I'm guilty, fast enough," muttered Dick inwardly, with grim irony. "I couldn't help being guilty after that kind of testimony. I suppose, now, I'm in for a good dose of the bastinado. I wonder if Herr Schwarz will give himself the pleasure of being present at the torture?"

No playful punishment is the bastinado. The victim is thrown to the ground, his wrists tied to a stake. Ropes are passed over his body and fastened to stakes on either side, thus binding



him down. His feet are tied across a plank, soles up, and upon the bottoms of the bare feet thus exposed, vicious blows with a bamboo are rained down. The victim of a bastinado is seldom able to stand upon his feet for a fortnight afterward. It is an old Spanish form of punishment which the Filipinos have copied with a good deal of delight.

Dick Carson's soles began to twitch in anticipation while he watched the officers conferring. Their faces were mild and calm, showing, in fact, little expression as they whispered together. At length they parted.

"Now it's time to know the worst," quivered the American boy. "Show them, old fellow, for the honor of your race, that an American can endure torture with the greatest coolness in the world!"

"Prisoner!" summoned the provost, and the sergeant led the boy once more before the desk. Dick was calm, a trifle defiant; he looked his judge unflinchingly in the face.

"Prisoner," said the provost, severely, "since you have not appreciated the kindness at first shown you, there is but one sentence possible. You are to be shot!"

“Shot!” echoed Dick Carson, thunderstruck. This blow, so unexpected, completely staggered him. For a moment he trembled, then took a step nearer the desk, but the sergeant pulled him back.

“Shot!” he repeated, incredulously.

“Within the hour,” answered the provost, with a cruel smile. “How? Have you Americanos no courage in the face of death?”

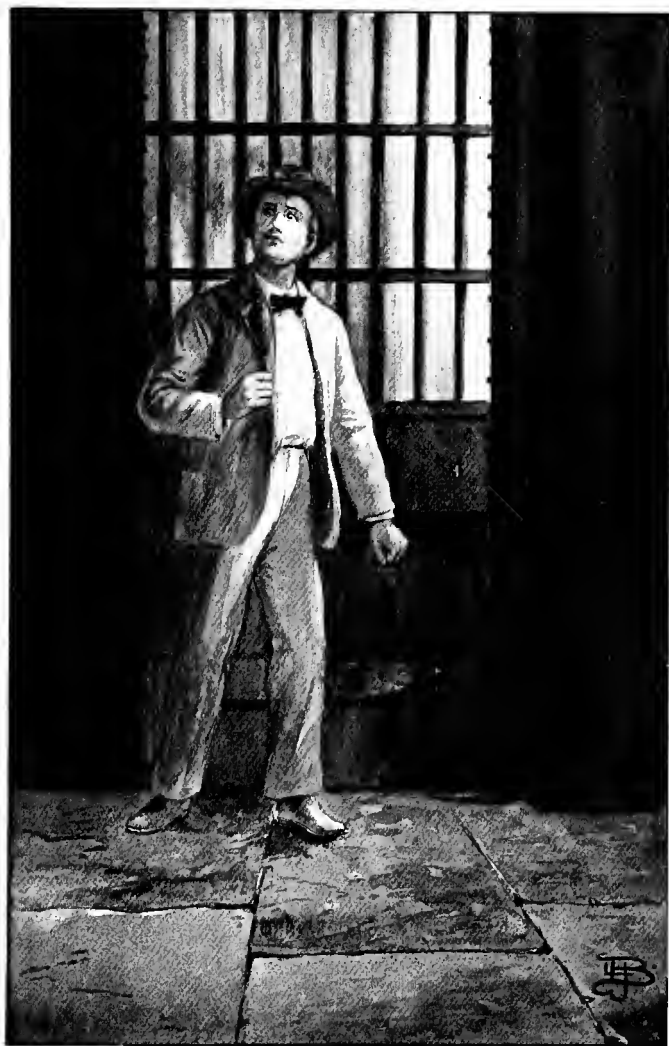
“Plenty! More than you could ever show in the same fix!” retorted Dick, his eyes flaming as he drew himself proudly up, and steeling himself against the trembling of his limbs. “But this unjust sentence” —

“Say no more!” was the harsh interruption. “Jose!”

The jailer, who had been listening from the corridor, glided into the office.

“Take the prisoner to his cell,” ordered the provost. “He has an hour of life left. If he should desire a priest, you may get him one if you care to do so.”

It would have been useless to try to say more. Crushed by this new and terrible turn of events, he submitted to being led from the room, through the





damp, gloomy corridor and up the stairs to the cell which he had occupied since coming to Malolos.

“So,” jeered Jose in his ear, “you could not learn the lesson that I recommended to you!”

Dick made no answer. Jose thrust him through the doorway, noisily clanging the cell door after him. Click! Having secured the condemned one, Jose went away to dream over a cigarette.

For two or three minutes Dick did not stir. He stood like one dazed, with his back to the door, thinking dully over the events of the last hour or two. It seemed to him that it must be all a dream, a most horrible one, in which Herr Schwarz and the Filipino provost-general played the goblin parts. He did not sob; did not tremble. He simply wondered, in a dulled sort of way, if it could possibly be true.

To be shot in an hour! How much of that time had already passed? The thought made the boy rouse. Swift as thought, he wheeled about, stealthily trying his door. It was securely locked, nor had he so much as a match-end with which to attempt to force the bolt. His glance travelled quickly around the cell. He saw nothing that could possibly be used as an implement to aid escape.

"I guess I might as well give it up," he muttered, grimly. "There's no show to get out of here until the hour is up — until they come for me. I wonder how these Filipinos manage an execution. Do they stand at the cell door, thrust their rifles between the bars, and make it a matter of butchery — murder? Or do they have a parade ground, where they shoot their prisoners in sight of the multitude? And — and — I wonder how it feels to be struck by a bullet?"

There was a sort of dull ache around his heart, a choking feeling in the throat. An observer, had there been one, might have thought that Dick Carson was stolid, apathetic — indifferent in the face of his doom. The truth was, the boy was too weighed down by the sudden misery of his situation to feel keenly the whole terror of his position.

"If they would only let me write a letter in the time I have to wait," he thought bitterly.

"But no — that is quite out of the question. Even if these scoundrels gave me pen, ink, and paper they would see to it that my last letter was not delivered. They are too treacherous to be trusted in anything where an American is concerned."

Strive as he would to keep his mind off such thoughts, he could not help conjuring up in advance the scene of the execution. He had heard that the Filipinos were very poor rifle-shots. He fell to wondering how close the muzzles of the rifles would be to his head.

“I hope they don’t botch the job,” he thought, desolately. “It would be fearful, I should think, to be fatally wounded, and then to have two or three more volleys fired into me. Will Herr Schwarz be there to see the miserable work which I fear he inspired?”

It would not do to think of bitterness and enmity in this last hour. Carson rose and paced the short stretch he had in the cell, trying to drive away all thought of the German. Then he knelt down and prayed, as his dead father had taught him to do. He felt calmer when he rose once more, and looked idly out of the cell door, wondering how nearly the hour was up, and whether his executioners would be late. He hoped not. Since there was no hope, it would be better to have the terrible suspense over with as quickly as possible.

“I’m sorry for Schwarz, if he had any hand in this business,” reflected the boy. “It will be fearful for him to look back upon it afterward. He didn’t want to have me put out of the way in the first place; that seems certain. If he has done this it must have been because I hit the nail on the head when I accused him of being an agent of the Filipino government. He may have been so afraid of being arrested by General Otis’ order that he didn’t dare to have me left alive on earth, with always the chance of my escaping and getting to Manila.”

Undeniably the minutes were slipping by. Dick began to feel certain that more than half of his last hour of life had slipped away. It would have been a great relief had he possessed a watch with which to keep track of the flying minutes.

“There’s one thing you’ve got to remember, old chap,” mused the condemned one. “For the honor of the United States, you’ve got to meet the end with all the coolness of a hero, no matter if you find yourself scared to death. It will all be over quickly enough—and *then* there won’t be anything to trouble you!”



How still it was in this upper corridor, with the occupants of all the cells away at their enforced labor! Dick remembered that he had thought the work hard. How glad he would be to be back there now, with the sergeant's blows and all!

A wistful look came into his eyes. Surely there was some mistake about it all that would soon be righted. He was too full of life and health to be so near death. If he could fall as a soldier does, fighting, with his face to the enemy, the thought of death would not be at all terrible, but to be executed like a felon! No, no! It could not be coming to pass!

Sighing, he stood leaning against the wall. Suddenly a sound caught his ear that made his flesh turn to ice. It was the soft patter of bare feet coming up the near-by stairs — the rhythmic tread of soldiers marching. A command rang out, and the patter of feet ceased. Another command was followed by the clank of rifle-butts on the stone floor of the corridor.

It was the firing-squad! The hour had come! Jose, looking a trifle less sleepy than usual,

appeared at the door of the cell, thrusting the key into the lock.

“Come, Americano,” leered the fellow, putting his eyes close to the bars, “you have not fainted with fright, have you?”

“No!” cried Dick, turning quickly.

“I hope your knees are good and strong under you,” went on the fellow, maliciously. “It is not every day that one has to go through such an ordeal as you will have to face.”

“I am all right,” answered Dick, in a clear voice, stepping firmly toward the door. “And so the time has come?”

Click! The turn of the key was Jose’s answer. Stepping back and swinging the door outward, he beckoned, and said:

“Yes, the hour is up! Come!”

## CHAPTER IX

## FACING THE FIRING-SQUAD

STEADY as steel was Dick Carson when he stepped from the cell into the corridor. Head up, with eyes showing no trace of dismay, he looked at his executioners, four brown little Filipino soldiers who stood leaning on the muzzles of their guns, while their officer, the same who had lately conducted our hero to the carcel, stood nonchalantly rolling a cigarette.

“Well, señor,” observed the *teniente*, putting the cigarette into his mouth and lighting it, “we will try to have your business over with as little trouble and delay as possible. Be kind enough to step in between my men, and we will take you to the ground.”

At the word of command the first two soldiers brought their guns to a carry and started down the stairs. Dick followed them, the last two soldiers bringing up the rear. Through the lower

corridor and out of the door they marched, and, now that the moment had come, Dick Carson was inwardly amazed to find how calm he had become.

The news of the execution must have travelled, for at the very door of the carcel the mob began. What a yell went up when the hapless boy appeared! It was as if so many wild beasts had scented blood. But there was no attempt made to rush the prisoner. His doom was known, and appeared to satisfy every one. Only, a few of the women cast pitying looks upon the handsome, manly young fellow destined to become a prey to Mauser bullets.

Soldiers had been stationed along the street on either side to keep a clear way for the executioner's party. The precaution was a necessary one, since without it the crush would have been frightful, so eager was every native to get a glimpse of the *Americano* who now possessed such a tragic interest for them.

Between the lines of soldiers the little party marched up the short street to the Plaza, or square. Here natives had gathered to the number of several thousands, with a sprinkling of Filipino

soldiers off duty. Dick had at first scanned the faces of the people in the throng. Finding them almost without exception animated by ferocious glee, he turned with disgust from them, and kept his eyes on the ground.

As they turned into the Plaza, however, a band struck up a lively air, and the cheering became intense. Looking up, our hero saw the band stationed on a platform, near the middle of the Plaza, while, right under the musicians, the populace swarmed with an eagerness that gave the soldier guards a great deal of trouble to preserve order.

As the firing-squad and condemned one came upon the scene, a company of soldiers drove the crowd back enough to give room to the principal actors in the approaching tragedy.

“There is the Americano!” shouted scores of people at once, and thousands of necks were craned for a view of the boy. “Ah, he shall see that we know how to punish our enemies!”

At a point almost in the center of the Plaza stood a pile of sandbags. Dick saw them and recognized their meaning with a slight twitching.

He knew that he was to be stationed against them, and that the bags of soil were to prevent the carrying of the bullets further than was intended or desired.

“Halt!” commanded the lieutenant at last, and Carson found himself within six feet of the sand-bags. There was a rattle of fire-crackers, set off by boys in the rear of the multitude. Though the band was playing, thousands of throats sent up yells that drowned out all sound of music. There were yells of glee, of malice and taunt. The people were making a merry occasion of this awful scene, nor were the deluded, ignorant natives wholly to be blamed for it, since it was this sort of thing that they had learned from their former masters, the Spaniards, during three hundred years.

When the crowd had cheered until it was out of breath the Filipino band began to play again. It was a lively, joyous, exultant air that made thousands of faces beam with anticipation of the coming sport. The lieutenant in charge of the firing-squad rolled and lighted another cigarette. Dick gazed about him, sick at heart, yet outwardly calm, look-

ing in vain, now, for one friendly or compassionate face in the whole throng. It was a vain search!

“Now let us have the death!” shouted a voice when the music ceased, and hundreds took up the cry. An officer who had been standing beside the band held up one hand as a sign for silence. He was a full minute in securing it, but at last the multitude became still, save for the popping of an occasional pack of fire-crackers in a side street.

“Citizens of the republic,” called out this officer, “you shall have your spectacle — never fear! But let there be no undue haste about it, for your pleasure would then be over all the sooner. And, first of all, it is necessary that I should read the death-warrant, that every citizen may know that this execution is according to the law.”

In a hurried, monotonous voice the officer began to read the warrant. It had the merit of brevity, that document. The clamor began again as soon as the reading was finished.

“You will stand a little closer to the barricade,” directed the *teniente*, placing both hands upon our hero’s shoulders, and backing him up to the bags. At the same time the four soldiers of the firing-

squad took their places in line a dozen feet away, and now stood leaning indifferently on their guns, the least concerned of all present.

There was a movement in the crowd, a pair of broad shoulders forcing their way, and a new spectator came upon the scene. He stood in the front rank, looking on with eager, snapping eyes, though his face was a trifle pallid and haggard.

“Ach! So this is what the people are cheering for!” ejaculated the newcomer, who was no other than Herr Schwarz. “So this is what my poor little friend has come to, is it? Ach! It is an awful thing to be stubborn and unfriendly.”

Though Dick heard the voice, and recognized it in an instant, he did not deign to look in the German's direction. Beyond showing a trifle more of pallor he gave no sign of this fresh annoyance.

“Be of good cheer, my young friend,” gibed Herr Schwarz. “This is only a pleasant spectacle for a fun-loving people. You are not to be hurt, for the soldiers fire only paper cartridges at you. Should one of the soldiers make a mistake and put a ball cartridge in his gun, though, it would be terrible, would it not?”



Still Dick did not even look in the German's direction. He had even regained his composure of face, and looked at the lieutenant, wondering why that official was waiting; why he did not order his men to take aim and fire.

As sure as day was day, Herr Schwarz did not mean to be robbed of this final sport. With the assurance of one who is much at home he left the crowd, passed the line of guards that was holding it back, and walked deliberately over to the spot where Dick stood. Just then the band struck up another lively air, and again the childish crowd began to cheer and yell.

“It is too bad, this fate of yours,” began the German, with a hypocritical grin. “And yet it is all your own fault. You and I might have been friends, and then you would have been safe and happy at this moment.”

Slowly Dick's head moved around until his eyes rested on the other's face with a glance of cool, superb contempt. Herr Schwarz seemed to find himself deprived of the triumph which he had expected to cry over the young American.

“All your own fault,” repeated Herr Schwarz.

But Dick had turned away again. He was at this moment beckoning to him the Filipino *teniente*.

"Lieutenant," began the boy, "in America there is a reptile whose breath is an offence to all decent manhood. That reptile is called the rattlesnake."

"That may be," replied the Filipino, "but I do not see why it should interest me."

"The rattler," resumed Dick, quickly, "is known as a synonym for treachery, cowardice, and dastardly attack."

"Even so," demanded the lieutenant in surprise. "What of it?"

"I hear one of those despised reptiles rattling now!" exclaimed the boy, turning suddenly to look upon Herr Schwarz with a look of such utter contempt that the latter tried to retort angrily, but found himself unable to do more than sputter. To hide his confusion before the crowd, Herr Schwarz then tried to turn it off with a laugh, and slunk back into the crowd, quickly vanishing altogether.

"Why are you waiting?" questioned Dick of the lieutenant. "Can't this be gotten over with decent speed, now?"

“The band is still playing,” was the answer. “Besides, it is likely that if we wait a few moments longer there will be more people here to see what is to happen. It is hard to understand why *you* should be impatient,” he added, with a smile. “When I receive the signal your hands will be bound. When the band begins to play the Filipino anthem, then you may know that it will be but a question of seconds, for when the anthem starts that is the signal for me to give the order to fire. Ah, my colonel is making me a signal that your hands are now to be bound.”

“Is that humiliation necessary?” questioned Dick. “Can you not at least allow me to die as a brave American?”

“Your hands must be bound,” was the crisp rejoinder. “It is the custom. It is always done.”

From the vicinity of the bandstand came two soldiers with cords. Passing between Dick and the barricade, they told him to hold his hands behind him. Paling slightly, our hero obeyed. Quickly and skilfully they knotted his wrists together, securing the arms just above the elbows with other

cords. Their work done, they saluted the officer and stepped aside.

"Now kneel," commanded the lieutenant.

"What for?" shot back Carson, all the color rushing to his face now, his lips quivering with pride and indignation.

"The condemned always kneel before the firing-squad," replied the *teniente*, with a show of mild surprise at the question.

"It would be infamous for an American to meet death on his knees," protested the boy.

"It is always done, nevertheless."

"Make an exception in my case," pleaded Dick, anxiously. "Lieutenant, I bear you no ill will for this afternoon's work. Do me this favor of allowing me to meet my death standing, and I will die grateful to you."

"There can be no exceptions. Down on your knees, and be quick about it! Do you hear the crowd? There will be trouble if this thing is much longer delayed."

In truth, there were signs that the rabble meant to make itself soon heard and felt. The early afternoon sun was beating down fiercely on the

Plaza. The people, standing for the most part without shade, felt the heat and glare so keenly that they were becoming ugly.

“Kneel!” insisted the lieutenant.

“I WON’T!”

All Dick Carson’s American spirit had come to the top. He straightened up, shooting a glare of defiance at the lieutenant and every one else in that eager throng. On that one point not even torture could have made him yield.

“Then,” came with a shrug of the young officer’s shoulders, “I will make you.”

“That’s the only way you can accomplish it,” said Dick, promptly.

Without more ado the *teniente* made a sign to the two soldiers who had bound the boy. Stepping up to him, they threw him to the ground in a trice. In so doing they struck him three or four savage blows with their fists. The crowd, regarding this as so much of extra spectacle, yelled with delight.

“You cowards!” groaned Dick under his breath.

Though he knew the helplessness of resistance, he kicked out in lively fashion with both feet,

giving the two soldiers a good deal of work to secure and properly bind his legs.

It was done at last, however. With a good deal of deliberation the two little brown soldiers raised him to his knees, using their last cord to secure his hands to his ankles in such fashion that the boy found it impossible to move. At a sign from their superior the pair glided back toward the guards.

Crisp orders rang out. Eager as spectators at a thrilling play, the people craned their necks forward. The order to aim was given, bringing the gleaming muzzles of four Mauser rifles in line with Dick Carson's head.

Then, amid breathless silence, the band on the platform began to play the Filipino anthem. The *teniente* held up his sword, the order to fire trembling on his lips.

## CHAPTER X

## THE LITTLE BROWN DICTATOR

OVER the strains of the playing band, over the cheering and shouts of “*viva*,” there suddenly came from the eastern edge of the populace a new and different yell. That new tone of the people was frantic with enthusiasm.

“Wait a moment! Stop!” shouted the officer on the platform.

Looking toward his superior, the little lieutenant saw that the order was intended for him. In a twinkling he gave the order for his men to uncock their pieces and again stand at “order arms.”

Some one was approaching, and that some one was of importance, for the dense crowd was surging in two opposite lines as if to make room for that some one to pass. Hats went frantically up in the air. Women were snatching off ornaments of pinelace and waving them on high with fanatic joy.

“*Viva el Presidente! Viva!*” rolled up the

heavy volume of acclaim. That explained it all. Aguinaldo was coming — Aguinaldo, the little brown dictator of the Tagalos — the man of the hour, who was hurling his devoted people upon the Americans in suicidal columns of mad revolt.

“*Viva el Presidente! Viva Aguinaldo!*”

Having finished the anthem, the band started to play it over again, with more volume, more snap, more enthusiasm, as the chorus of wild huzzas welled up. On the air there came a new shout:

“*Viva la Republica Filipina!*” (Long live the Philippine Republic!)

Now the crowd made way close to the scene of the coming execution, for it was toward this spot that the little dictator was evidently coming. Ponies' heads appeared, and then little brown soldiers in gorgeous uniforms, as Aguinaldo's cavalry body-guard rode up, the sun flashing on their drawn sabres.

Behind them came a handsome barouche. On the front seat, erect and proud, sat a little Filipino officer. In front of him, as he faced to the rear, stood another little man, dazzling in his handsome uniform, the numerous “orders” pinned upon his



breast, with one hand resting on the jewelled hilt of a sword, the other hand lifting a stupendously decorated sombrero in acknowledgment of the wild plaudits of the crowd.

Following close to the wheels of the carriage rode a dozen officers of the dictator's staff, then another detachment of the body-guard. Behind the body-guard swarmed thousands of people who were proud of the honor of marching in the hero's wake.

And this little man, bowing right and left with elate smile, was Don Emilio Aguinaldo y Fama, "president" of the Filipino "Republic," now greeted with wild joy because he had struck the promised blow at the Americans. He was in the height and pride of his power. Not even his defeat of the night before had humbled or dismayed him, for he was confident that his little soldiers, who could cheer so well, would yet speedily retrieve their defeat.

Close to the stand Aguinaldo's carriage stopped. The little dictator now held up his hand for silence, which was instantly granted him.

"How now, colonel?" he demanded of the officer with the band.

“A spectacle for the people, your excellency,” replied the colonel, saluting. “A prisoner condemned by the provost court is about to be shot.”

“It is well, then,” answered the “president.” “I will stay until it is over. But who is the condemned one? His offence?”

“A prisoner, who was inciting the others to plot an escape.”

“Ah! A Chino?”

“No, your excellency; an Americano.”

“An Americano?” repeated the little dictator in astonishment. “I did not know that we had such a prisoner in Malolos.”

“He is over there now, your excellency, kneeling before the barricade. The squad was about to fire when your excellency arrived.”

“Then let me not long delay the satisfaction of my people in such a sight. But first I wish to see the papers.”

Springing nimbly down from the platform, the colonel approached the dictator's carriage, holding up a single sheet.

“Ah, this is only the warrant,” said Aguinaldo,

perusing it. "Have you not the other papers in the case?"

"Your excellency, they are at the provost office."

"And that is but a step from here, so let them be sent for, — yes, and the provost himself. Say that the president commands haste."

As the colonel called a younger officer and despatched him on the errand, a low murmur of discontent began to rise.

"Patience, my people," requested Aguinaldo, and the tumult was still.

Dick Carson, who had not heard all that was said, but who had at last gained the knowledge that the little brown "president" was now at hand, began to tremble with a new hope.

"If I could only speak to him?" he insinuated to the lieutenant, who now stood close beside him.

"As much as dare to try," was the stern rejoinder, "and I will have one of my soldiers stop your mouth with the butt of a musket."

Dick subsided. After all, for what could he hope from the president? If Herr Schwarz were powerful enough to bring about this dastardly

revenge, was it likely that Aguinaldo would interfere and offend a powerful and useful friend? Our hero did not know that the execution had been postponed by order of Aguinaldo, but supposed that it had merely been deferred until some more pressing business could be attended to.

Back came an officer, followed by the provost-general, who carried in his hand two or three documents which, after saluting, he passed to the president.

Aguinaldo scanned the papers, while the crowd silently fumed.

“General,” said the man of the hour, “it does not seem to me that a very good case was made out against the condemned one.”

“I and the officers of the court were satisfied, your excellency,” replied the provost. “Besides, he is an Americano.”

“Yes, an Americano!” cried several of the crowd who stood near enough to hear what was said. “He should die!”

“Let the condemned one be brought here,” ordered Aguinaldo.

The order was passed along. One of the soldiers

who had bound our hero now slashed at the cords around the boy's legs. With his hands still tied behind him, Dick was led to the side of the carriage.

"There is the dog, your excellency," announced the provost-general, pointing at Carson.

Aguinaldo looked him over curiously. Dick returned the glance unabashed.

"May I speak?" he asked.

"Silence!" ordered three or four officers in the same breath.

Aguinaldo continued to reflect. His mind ran back to the defeat of the night before—the defeat which he had proclaimed to his people as a victory. Though still inclined to be hopeful, the little dictator had felt moments of depression that day. He had just received confidential news that the Americans were again engaged in driving his forces further back from Manila. Perhaps, after all, the Americans were braver and harder to whip than he had thought.

"Is it possible that I am yet to be defeated?" mused Aguinaldo, as he continued to look reflectively at the American boy. "Perhaps—who

knows—the day will come when I shall be a prisoner in the hands of the Americanos. If that day comes, I shall have many enemies who will eagerly urge my death. What if”—

Here he let his gaze wander to the impatient rabble, who, despite their worship of him, had stood the glare of the hot tropical sun on their heads until they were becoming ugly.

“Perhaps if I spare this boy now, the day will come when a remembrance of it will cause the Americanos to be more lenient with me. It will do me no harm to have a hostage to mercy. As I save this boy’s life now, may the Americanos spare me if ever I should fall into their hands through the fortunes of war!”

Rousing from his revery he said, quickly:

“Let the prisoner’s hands be untied.”

In an instant a shout of protest went up from those of the crowd who heard. But one of the soldiers had already begun to slash at the cords around Dick’s wrists.

“You have heard my order,” said Aguinaldo, eying the rabble sternly. “Why this shout against my authority?”

“ But he is an Americano ! He deserves to be shot ! We are cheated of the sport which we have waited here an hour to see ! ” shouted back many of the angry people.

“ Am I your president, or am I something base, that you murmur against me ? ” demanded Aguinaldo, with that grandiloquence which he knew so well how to assume.

“ *Viva el Presidente ! Viva Aguinaldo ! Viva la Republica Filipina !* ” shouted several of the staff, taking their cue from their chief.

In a twinkling the cry was taken up by thousands of the civilian part of the crowd. The Filipino is impressed by the show of power ; he worships the holder of it. Aguinaldo's boldness had succeeded where hesitation would have created trouble.

“ Prisoner,” said Aguinaldo, beckoning our hero to him when the tumult had begun to subside, “ you have benefited by my mercy. See that you show yourself worthy of it. Your life has been spared. Show that you can be grateful for it.”

“ I beg to assure you of my gratitude,” answered Dick, sincerely. “ I beg to be permitted to say enough more to convince you that my arrest in the

first place was an unjust one, or made through a mistake. I came to Malolos several days ago on a pass signed by one of your own officers. My errand was a business one, and it is only just that I should be permitted to go through your lines to those of my countrymen."

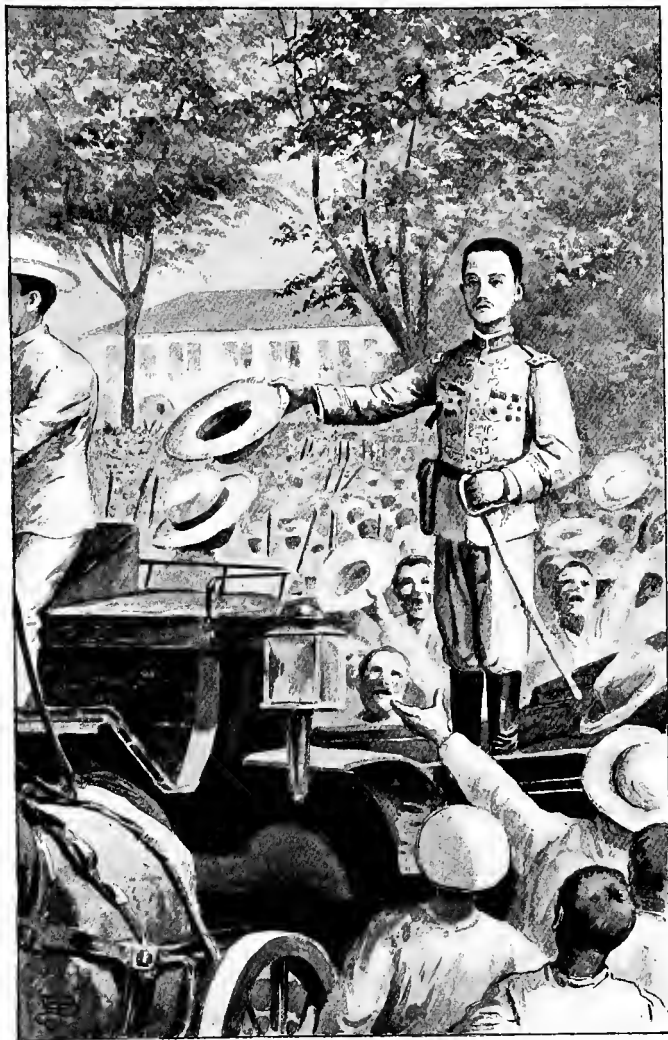
"Silence!" commanded Aguinaldo, in a voice sterner than he had yet used. "It is not for you to question the justice of our laws. You are a prisoner, and a prisoner you will remain. Colonel Pluma!"

One of the staff officers behind the carriage dismounted and approached on foot, saluting respectfully.

"Colonel, you asked me the other day for a Chino to act as your body-servant. I was compelled to refuse you, as all the Chinos in our hands are needed to dig on the fortifications. But here is a prisoner who is not worth as much as a Chino. Nevertheless, he may make an acceptable servant to you. He is yours."

"I thank your excellency for your gracious favor," responded the colonel, saluting, then bowing very low.





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“Now take the Americano from my sight. I have something to say to my people.”

“Come with me,” whispered Pluma, leading our hero roughly by the arm. “Stand beside my horse. When I ride, trot beside me. If you lag you shall be whipped until you find your speed!”

Saved from death at the last gasp, Dick Carson was not disposed to grumble over the humiliation of being made to play the servant to this consequential little brown officer. The boy's heart throbbed with gratitude for the present deliverance. He would hold his peace and keep his eyes open in the hope that the same kind fate would soon show him the way to escape a second time, and to find his way to the camps of his own countrymen.

Aguinaldo, sombrero in hand, had mounted upon the cushions of his carriage in one of his characteristic poses of importance. The people, realizing that he was about to speak, forgot their late disappointment and greeted him with cheers. Holding up his hand for silence, the little presidente began:

“My people, I thank you for your loyalty to your chosen leader. You all know of the glorious victory which Heaven enabled our arms to win last night. There will be a little more fighting and our republic will be firmly established. Should the Americanos send other armies here, you all know what the result must be. Our republic can never die while her sons are so loyal and so ready to rush to arms. We have a soldier, now, to carry every gun in our possession; we have bolo men by thousands, for whom there are yet no rifles; but we shall soon have more rifles, and our army must swell to proportions that must amaze the world. I ask more of you to go into training for the glorious service ahead of us. Those who cannot get bolos should join the instruction regiments and drill with the wooden guns, that they may know how to handle real rifles when they arrive from Hong Kong. Show your loyalty by the number of your volunteers!”

Frantically the “vivas” rolled upward in greeting of this appeal. After a minute of this wild enthusiasm, Aguinaldo held up his hand once more for silence, that he might make himself heard.

“There will be a little more fighting, to-night and to-morrow, my people. Therefore I must leave you to go down on one of the trains that are taking our troops to the field of victory. I promise you that I shall lead our cause in person now, as I have in the past.”

With those closing words the little brown dictator stepped down, seated himself, and, amid more boisterous clamor of “vivas,” rode off, his escort turning sharply toward the east, trotting down the long dusty street that led to the railroad station. As before, cheering throngs closed in behind the escort and streamed in the presidente’s wake.

“Keep close, dog,” Colonel Pluma roughly warned our hero. “It will be worse for you if you lag behind and fall into the hands of the crowd!”

“Thank you,” muttered Dick, under his breath, as he trotted on foot beside the horse of his new “master.” “I wouldn’t for the world lose the chance of keeping with you. Going to the front, are you? That’s just where I want to go, too! It will be hard luck, indeed, if I can’t, by watch-

ing, find a chance to make a dash toward the American lines!"

With this thought uppermost in his mind, the American boy's feeling was one of exultation. His eyes sparkled with the enthusiasm of the daring thought. What mattered it to him that the fierce sun scorched down on him in a way that otherwise would have made running a torture?

As the Barasoain station was neared the streets were found to be lined with battalions of native troops, eagerly awaiting their turn to be shipped by rail from the "capital" to the front. Four long trains lay waiting on the narrow-gauge track and its siding. Troops were filing aboard amid scenes of the most extravagant joy. It was to be such an easy victory over the cowardly *Americanos*!

Foremost of all on the track was the special train that was to bear Aguinaldo, his staff, and some of his picked troops to the front.

Colonel Pluma, detaching himself from the presidential column as it halted, rode up to one of the hindmost cars, already packed to suffocation with armed Malays.

“Here, my children,” called the colonel, “take this Americano in with you. Do not kill him, for he is my servant.”

One of the grinning *soldados* swung the door open. Dick, glad to get in out of the scorching sun, clambered inside. The car, a third-class, squalid affair, reeking with awful odors, was already more crowded than it should have been.

“Make way and a seat for his excellency,” gibed one of the *soldados*.

This sally was greeted by a roar of laughter. Two or three of the little wretches slyly drew their bayonets from their scabbards, giving the boy sharp jabs with the keen points.

“I am alone, friendless, and quite helpless,” said Carson quietly, in Spanish. “Go on and have your fun, gentlemen.”

“Why does no one give his excellency a seat?” demanded one of the insurgents, as two more bayonets were jabbed into the back of his legs, causing Dick to wince with the pain.

“There is some room on the ceiling. Let him sit there,” responded another.

“Yes; let him sit up there on the points of our bayonets!”

Had it not been for the fear of provoking Colonel Pluma's wrath, it is certain that the American would have quickly found himself pinned to the ceiling on points of steel.

These *soldados* were from the very dregs of the Tagalo tribe. They were of the peons, or laborers, dirty, ignorant, cruel, and many of them hideous with the rot of leprosy. They were the descendants of the Malay pirates who had scourged the eastern seas in ages past. A trifling smattering of education, centuries of tyrannical oppression by the Spaniards — that was all the difference.

But Dick Carson, despite his trying surroundings, was secretly jubilant. He was going to the front — near to his own countrymen!



## CHAPTER XI

## A CRUEL "MASTER"

JAMMED in the middle of that sweating herd of humanity, sickened by the dense clouds of tobacco smoke, still the victim of many sly persecutions, Dick waited with devouring impatience for the train to start.

Finally the bell rang. Amid cheers from the crowd that lined the tracks the presidential train rolled slowly down the track. It went past the huge freight-shed, whose sloping zinc roof was crowded with native boys who had failed to get any other good point from which to view the military spectacle. Down past the road to Quingua went the train, then stopped. The other three trains were not yet fully loaded. Aguinaldo, lover of show, would not rejoin his army around Manila until he could do so at the head of battalions of men light-hearted and eager for the fray.

Away down the line toward Guinguito the

people from all the country around swarmed to watch the departure of reënforcements to their victorious army. In their credulous joy it did not occur to them to ask themselves why a victorious army needed such reënforcements. There were repeated "vivas" for "*el presidente*" and "*elejercito*" (the army), while *soldados*, leaning from the car windows, answered their well-wishers in kind. In a rather palatial car up forward, Aguinaldo and his personal staff were lunching on costly viands, eaten from china dishes of rare workmanship. They drank from costly cut glass. Whenever possible so to do, the little dictator lived with great pomp.

One after another the trains were filled with as much of sweltering humanity as they would hold. When all was ready the signal was given. The four trains now started down the track amid noisy demonstrations.

Guiguinto was passed without a slowing-up of speed, but at Bigaa, some six or seven miles below Malolos, the presidential train slowed up, causing those that followed to do the same. At the station the foremost train came to a stop. Dick, packed

in tightly as he was, could see nothing. Indeed, he cared little for the sights that might be seen; his mind was entirely on the finish of the journey. Along the platform came tramping a Tagalo soldier.

"Where is the Americano?" he demanded, halting by the door of the last car.

"Here," answered several of the fellow's comrades at once.

"Come out, Americano," was the gruff order.

Dick felt a quick sinking at the heart. If he must leave the train here, what was to become of his cherished hope of escaping to the American lines? It was of no use, however, to think of resisting the order. Helped along by the lusty shoves of his car-mates, he reached the door, from which he was pushed out, landing on the station platform on his hands and knees. Gleeful laughter greeted his unceremonious exit from the car.

"Hurry down there," said the messenger, pointing. "Your master wants you. Make haste, or I'll take you to him on the point of my bayonet!"

"Master!" That was a new word to the free-born American boy. But this was not the best

time to stand on his dignity. Swallowing his resentment, he walked in the indicated direction. He made out Colonel Pluma standing under the portico of the little depot.

“So, you lazy rascal, you have got along at last, eh?” demanded the colonel, regarding him with a wrathful frown. “There is some baggage of mine,” pointing to two valises. “Pick it up and follow me, or you shall feel a bamboo over your shoulders.”

Poor Dick! Flushing red with indignation and humiliation, he clenched his hands. For an instant he was on the point of open rebellion.

“What’s the use, though?” he quivered. “It won’t help me just now to be too independent, and it would hurt my plans.”

Walking to the two valises, he picked up one with either hand, turned to the colonel, and awaited further orders. That worthy, not deigning to use more words, turned on his heel, starting to walk across a field at the rear of the depot. The valises were heavy, but Carson, though dripping with perspiration, struggled under them manfully, determined not to give way to fatigue.

In the distance lay a little river, one of those tide-water streams that intersect the country at every few hundred yards in this part of the island. Close to the nearer bank of the river hundreds of Chinese coolies, under guard of soldiers, were throwing up thick embankments of earth. At the first sight of this work, Dick Carson's heart bounded for joy. Colonel Pluma, happening to turn at this instant, saw the boy's happy look and stopped to look at him closely.

"Well," growled the fat little Filipino, "what makes you look so delighted?"

"Happiness," promptly replied Carson.

"Happiness?" repeated the colonel, sneeringly.

"Yes. I was told at Malolos this morning that the Tagalos had won a great victory over my countrymen."

"It was true," rejoined Colonel Pluma, boastingly.

"If that is so," challenged Dick, "why are you building intrenchments fifteen miles away from Manila?"

A Spanish oath escaped Colonel Pluma in answer to this audacious query. He glared hard at the

smiling American boy, who did not flinch before that gaze. Dick was no longer to be deceived. The sight of the intrenchments, which were being erected with great haste, had opened his eyes. He knew well enough, now, that the tales of victory by the Filipinos were all buncombe.

“Don’t you ask any more questions!” cried the Filipino, in a towering passion. “Don’t you open your mouth, except to answer me when I speak to you. Follow me, and remember that you are dumb.”

Walking up to the nearest point of the trenches, Pluma pointed to a near-by mango tree.

“Put the valises there,” he directed. “Stay there with them until I call you.”

Philosophically Dick obeyed, squatting on the ground beside the bags in the grateful shade. He was suffering for a drink of water, yet knew better than to ask for it at present.

Watching Colonel Pluma, it did not take him long to guess what that worthy’s work was. It was plain that he was the engineer officer in charge of making the fortifications. The colonel walked up and down the line and inspected the work, giving

orders to the coolies, and to some younger Filipino officers who appeared to be his subordinates.

"They expect a stubborn fight," mused Carson, noting that the embankments were several feet in thickness, and that the coolies were making loopholes, framed with bamboo, near the top of the parapet. "This place is about fifteen miles from Manila, which means that the American troops should be here by to-morrow at the latest. A good many of our poor lads will doubtless be shot from these loopholes."

"Americano!" came the sharp summons.

Dick, looking around him, saw Colonel Pluma regarding him.

"I suppose this is where I have to run like a dog," sighed the boy.

He started to walk briskly toward the colonel. The latter tossed him a key, saying:

"Open my valise, the smaller one. You will find a box of cigars. Bring me five or six."

Picking up the key, Dick turned without a word, made his way back to the baggage, got the cigars, took them to the colonel, and also handed back the key.

“Go back there, and be quicker, the next time I call you,” ordered Pluma, with a frown.

Facing about, Dick started to return. He had taken but two steps when he felt an outrageous kick from behind. Wheeling like a flash, he found himself confronted by Pluma's blazing eyes.

“Do you know enough to salute me, when you receive an order?” breathed the colonel, wrathfully.

Poor Dick choked helplessly. For an instant he had to battle with himself to restrain his natural inclination to leap upon the fat little tyrant and bear him to the earth. Turning, he started rapidly to walk to the tree.

“Come back,” raged Pluma. “Come back and salute me!”

Fearing a second kick, Dick quickened his pace without replying.

Crack! A shot rang out loud and clear, and Dick heard the ball go whizzing by his ear. Facing around, he saw a smoking revolver in the Filipino colonel's hand.

“Come back and salute me,” was the order, sternly repeated.

“I suppose I've got to,” grimaced the boy. “It's



cheaper than being killed. Confound the little bully! If I were armed too, how soon he'd change his tune!"

"Are you going to keep me waiting until dark?" fumed the little brown man. Dick quickened his pace to a trot, halted four feet from Pluma and brought his right hand up to the rim of his hat, as he had seen soldiers do.

"That is better," said the colonel. "Do not wait to be told again."

How it went against the grain for Carson to again salute! But he did it with the feeling that it was only by patience under persecution that he could hope to find a chance for liberty.

"Go back to my baggage now."

For the third time the boy saluted. Wheeling squarely, he walked back to the tree, sinking upon the grass and waiting for his burning cheek to cool. His mortification was only increased by noting that several of the Chinos, having witnessed the incident, were now grinning at him.

Yet our hero soon came to the conclusion that, bad as his lot was, it was considerably better than that of these poor Chinos. They were compelled

to stand out in the blazing sun, toiling like beavers. If a Chino, driven almost out of his senses by heat and thirst, dared to mutiny against the task-masters, it was his fate to be killed and thrown into the nearest river. Every coolie found within the insurgent lines was made a slave of in this fashion.

From the coolies Dick let his gaze wander to the Filipino soldiers. The section of intrenchment that our hero could see was probably some half mile in length. Within those limits he judged the number of Tagalo soldiers in view to be between two and three hundred, exclusive of a few score engaged in guarding the coolies. At a distance of some yards back of the intrenchments was an irregular line of little bamboo "shacks," none more than three feet in height. Each of these shacks was capable of sheltering three or four of the insurgents from the rays of the sun.

What was that that sounded so faintly away to the southward? Quick as a flash Dick was upon his feet, eagerly straining his ears for a repetition of the sound. It came. This time he could not mistake it. Faint as it was, it was the boom of a cannon. In a few seconds he heard it for a third time.

"Fighting!" the boy muttered ecstasically. "American fighting! There is a battle on. Oh, God grant that our brave fellows may not be long in reaching here, and in sweeping on up to Malolos!"

After two or three minutes of strained, quivering attention, he heard the cannon-fire resumed again.

"The Utahs are making Old Glory respected!" Dick murmured rapturously, his eyes growing misty as he thought of that grand old flag being borne in triumph across the field to the tune of the cannon's roar and the rifle's sharp rattle.

He listened with absorbing anxiety for the sound of rifle-volleys, but could not hear them, from which he concluded that the scene of battle was yet too far away for *that* sound to be audible. But he did hear the cannon again, after an interval. To Carson's fevered fancy it sounded as if the guns were coming much nearer to Bigaa.

"Was there ever such sweet music before?" he wondered, sinking down to the ground. He was choking now, and crying quietly from sheer joy and pride in that dear old flag! His lips framed softly the words of the "Star Spangled Banner," the

grand, simple melody rising in his soul like an anthem. Over and over again he hummed it. "America" and "Columbia" trembled next on his lips. The choking sob vanished from his throat, the mist clearing from his eyes, until that hapless American boy, a helpless and despised prisoner in the camp of the enemy, far from the flag whose glory he was singing, revelled in the happiness of kings over those few occasional and distant mutterings of cannon manned by some two hundred sturdy Western volunteers.

Fortunately for Dick, he was not disturbed in that hour of happiness. Colonel Pluma, having heard the sound too, had hurried over to the railway station to learn from the telegraph operator how the fate of war was going. When he returned to the intrenchments the colonel looked very grave indeed. He hurried the already drooping Chinese with such persistent ugliness that Carson augured the most favorable news of American triumph. Still, the sound of rifle-firing did not come within hearing. That was all that was needed to fill the boy's cup of happiness.

Just before dark the fat little colonel approached

the tree. Had he not been absorbed in his own thoughts he would have noticed that the American did not salute, but stood up, quietly eying him.

"Pick up the valises, and follow me," was all Pluma said, as he started toward a distant grove of mango and banana trees; and the boy silently obeyed, following in his wake.

All afternoon Dick had been wondering where the town of Bigaa lay. He was not long, now, in finding out. As they stepped into the edge of this grove to the westward they came upon a well-beaten road. A little further on Carson caught sight of several bamboo and *nipa* houses, each standing in a neat little yard. The road was a long one, leading past many of these compact *nipa* houses. The frames were of bamboo; the floors, raised from the ground some three or four feet, were of woven bamboo. The roofs were thatched with *nipa*, a peculiar flag that grows in the swamps of Luzon. Doors, and blinds for the windows, were woven of the same material.

To Dick, as he followed his "master," it seemed as if this street of *nipa* houses was endless. It appeared to circle around the town, while from it

many shorter streets branched out. Here and there a more pretentious building of artificial stone was to be seen. In the yards, even in the street, hens and chickens grubbed about for food, while the dirty little slate-colored pig of the Philippines was visible at every turn. In this mass of animal life children played, Filipino women worked; and men lounged at the front windows of the houses, smoking an endless succession of cigarettes. It was the hour of the evening meal, and from the rear end of every house could be heard the sizzling of frying, with many varieties of odors floating out upon the air.

A church, its doors wide open and three or four barefooted soldiers lounging there, was passed. Dick, straining under the weight of the two heavy valises, began to wonder if the colonel intended to walk forever. But Pluma, strolling slowly, and toiling under no weight, but deriving huge satisfaction from the black cigar he was smoking, seemed content to wander. He kept on, for a dozen houses past the church, before he turned into a yard. He passed around to a door at the side of a rather pretentious *nipa* house, ascended the ladder-like steps, and halted inside to survey his "slave."

"Bring the baggage up here," he ordered, and Dick, obeying, set the valises on the floor just inside the door.

"Not there, you rascal, not there!" cried Pluma, harshly. "Pick them up and place them where I show you!"

"And after that?" asked Dick, quietly. Believing that he had thoroughly intimidated his new body servant, Pluma did not notice the dangerous quiet of the boy's manner.

"After you have taken the valises into my bedroom," roared the colonel, "you will go into the kitchen, light a fire, and prepare my supper from the materials you will find there. If you are not quick about it I will take some of the skin off your back. Now pick up the valises!"

Right there was where Col. Manuel Pluma, of the Philippine army, received the greatest surprise of his life.

For Dick Carson, drawing back his foot, deliberately kicked one of the bags into the corner of the room. Turning swift as a flash, he kicked the other valise out of doors.

## CHAPTER XII

## AN ORDEAL OF TORMENT

UTTERING a cry of rage, Colonel Pluma darted backward, letting his hand fall upon the butt of the revolver in the holster at his belt, for there was something in Dick Carson's flashing eyes that made it seem likely he intended to kick his tyrant after one or the other of the bags.

"You scoundrel!" roared the little colonel, turning as near white with passion as it was possible for his deep mahogany skin to do, "pick up those bags and bring them to me. If you have broken anything in either of them you shall pay their value."

"If you want them," retorted Dick, defiantly, as he threw his head back, "go and get them yourself!"

"Are you my servant, or not?" demanded Pluma, his eyes burning with a dangerous light as he drew his revolver from the holster.

"I was a prisoner of war, though not justly so,"



rejoined Dick, proudly. "Still, prisoners of war must suffer some humiliation, I suppose. Had you been a little more decent with me, I should have gone on working for you as long as was necessary. But I will not be a dog for any man, not even for the sake of living. I shall never do another stroke for you. No ; don't waste time pointing your pistol at me, for I am not to be scared by it. I'd much sooner be killed than degrade myself by playing the servant to a bullying, degraded little savage like you !"

At this fearful insolence, actually directed at himself, Colonel Pluma fairly gasped. Though he stood glaring at the boy, he slowly put his revolver back in his holster, seeing which Dick smiled disdainfully.

"We shall soon tame you, my Americano !" exclaimed the little colonel, in a voice hoarse with rage, as he pushed his way past this mutineer to the door. Looking down the street, Pluma beheld three insurgent soldiers to whom he loudly called. They came on a run, and to them, as they entered the house, the colonel pointed out the American boy.

"Seize the rascal," he ordered, and Dick, though

he fought with a good grace, speedily found himself on the floor, with the three Tagalos holding him down with no gentle force. Colonel Pluma darted into another room, returning with a piece of cord, which he handed to one of the soldiers.

“Tie the rascal,” he directed. “Then take him out and tie him to that mango tree in the yard.”

Nothing loath, and scenting further amusement with this Americano, the soldiers obeyed, Colonel Pluma following them into the yard to see that the work was done to his satisfaction. When Dick had been made so fast to the tree that it was impossible to move hand or foot, Colonel Pluma ordered the soldiers to run and fetch a half a dozen stout bamboos. When this had been done his next command was :

“Now, each of you pick out a stick to his own liking. Lay them across him one at a time, until you are all tired. We shall see whether he will continue insolent.”

The stoutest of the three little soldiers picked out a switch to his liking, tested it over his palm, and, eyeing Dick keenly, advanced toward him. Swish ! Across Dick's chest landed the blow, with such force

that the boy, valiant though he meant to be, could with difficulty keep from crying out. That blow, surely, must have raised a welt under the clothing. A second blow, and a third, came in quick succession. Then the soldier paused, surveying the boy in a good deal of astonishment, for not one cry had come from the sufferer.

“It seems that I am not strong,” mocked the soldier, taking breath before he started in with a renewed castigation, much more furious than before.

Still no sound came from Carson. It was growing dark under the mango tree. His inquisitors could not see how white the boy’s face was, how tensely drawn the lines of suffering in his face.

Out of breath, the soldier stopped. Wiping the perspiration from his forehead, he muttered :

“Never have I seen a man with tougher hide. Juan, you try a few touches while I am fanning back my breath.”

As the first soldier stood on one side, listlessly raising the breeze with his hat, the second rained down a dozen terrific blows. Poor Dick ! He felt as if his blood were coming with every blow ; his shirt was moist ; he dared not look down, for fear that he

would see the red stains. Yet, with teeth tightly clenched, he determined to bite his tongue off sooner than utter one groan. By the time, however, that the second Filipino had worn his withe out, tears that Carson could not keep back were slowly stealing down his cheeks.

"Now let us see if you are stronger," hinted Colonel Pluma, turning to the last soldier. Is there no *hombre* (man) strong enough, or withe hard enough, to make this Americano cry for mercy?"

At hearing this, Dick Carson smiled for an instant, despite his pain. It gratified him to feel that his fortitude had been so great as to disappoint his tormentors. In another moment, however, blows were falling across the former cuts with a keenness that brought fresh tears to his eyes. Not a sound, though, got past his lips.

"You are stubborn," commented Pluma, grimly, as he stepped closer to the boy after the third flogging. "Ah, we have made you cry, have we? And now you will be more tractable? You will obey my every command after this?"

"Never!" said Dick, desperately.

"Ah, you need more of this whipping!"

“Just as you like, but you can never make me serve you again.”

From glaring savagely at his victim, Colonel Pluma bent over to snatch up one of the switches that had not been used. He poised it as if about to supplement his soldiers' work with some of his own. Changing his mind, however, he tossed away the switch, saying:

“We shall see, Americano, how long your stubbornness will last. Not until you promise to be docile shall you be cut free of that tree. Until then, though it be for a week, you shall remain where you are. Nor shall you taste food. We shall see how long your courage will last under such treatment. Come away, my men, and leave the Americano to reflect.”

Turning on his heel, Colonel Pluma went into the house, followed by the three soldiers. While the colonel lighted a cigar, and seated himself at one of the front windows where he could overlook the street, the three men went into the rear room, where the smoke of a fire and smell of food told how they were preparing their officer's supper.

In the meantime Carson underwent the most

acute torture. His flesh, raised in ridges and welts by the unmerciful thrashing, seemed fast swelling. The cutting of the cords against the lacerated flesh gave him acute agony. An hour went by, during which Colonel Pluma had tossed away his cigar and gone to his supper. Dick's body was rapidly stiffening. Even had he been liberated now, he would have been hardly able to walk.

Yet, after what had passed, his will was not one whit broken.

"They may kill me," he muttered between his tight teeth, "but let them if they want to. It would be better to die than to submit to this treatment every day. That sergeant at Malolos was bad enough, but this colonel is a fiend. I could never feel any respect for myself again if I submitted to him."

Their work over, the soldiers came out into the yard, one of them carrying a guitar. Seating themselves at the rear of the yard, they lighted cigars, — for every grown-up native smokes, — and the man with the guitar began to play softly.

From where Dick stood bound to the tree, he

could get a good view of the interior of the house. The front room was lighted by two oil lamps. Here Colonel Pluma sat at a desk, poring over papers, presumably plans of fortifications. For an hour or more he scanned them, occasionally jotting down something. He seemed to have forgotten all about the wretched Americano bound to the tree out in the yard.

Out in the street, of which Dick had a glimpse also, men and women strolled by in small parties. Children played noisily, the boys with guns of bamboo, for war was then the business of all ages out in the Filipino country. Music came from other yards near by. There was laughter on every hand, for these light-hearted people could be merry even in the face of the enemy.

Then, up near the church, a native band began to play. The natives are born musicians and music-lovers. Everybody within hearing seemed to rush at once to get as close to the band as possible.

An officer galloped up to the house, dismounted, and went inside. He had a few minutes' conversation with Colonel Pluma, received some papers, came out with them, mounted, and rode away.

Dick, looking into the house, saw something that filled him with more bitterness than ever. The colonel, having finished his day's work, was now slowly preparing to retire. No thought was to be given to the Americano outside.

Up the street the concert had long ago ceased, the people of Bigaa dispersing to their homes. One after another the lights in the little *nipa* houses went out. There was no sound now, save for the occasional hail of a sentry at one of the street corners :

“ *Para! Quien vive? Vamos!* ” (Halt! Who's there? Pass on!) Those frequently uttered words of the sentries burned themselves into the boy's aching brain during that long night. The passage of a patrol party of the insurgents, which happened five or six times during the dark hours, was a relief in the monotony of suffering.

By daylight Colonel Pluma was up. Going to the front window, he summoned a soldier to come and prepare his breakfast. An hour later, having eaten, and now with the inevitable cigar between his teeth, the fat little colonel strolled out into the yard.



“Eh, my Americano?” he jeered. “Humble now?”

Not a word did Dick answer. He looked the little brown man fully in the eyes, then glanced out toward the street.

“Not yet ready to beg? To promise? Oh, well, you shall have plenty of time!”

Saying which, the colonel strolled to his gate, where he lounged in the shade of two banana trees until a horse was brought around for him.

By this time the people of Bigaa were passing by in little groups on their way to morning market, for, having no ice, and food being quickly perishable in that hot climate, each meal must be marketed by itself.

One of the first groups caught sight of our hero, stopped, and stared at him. Others collected, until Dick found himself being closely regarded by several scores of men, women, and children.

“He is being fattened for the colonel’s table,” laughingly guessed one of the men.

“No! He is a target for our children to practise at with stones!” shrilly pronounced a woman. This notion, greeted with yells and laughter, would

have been speedily acted upon had not a *soldado* appeared and warned them that Colonel Pluma would stand no nonsense; that this Americano tied to the tree was wholly the colonel's affair. After that the soldier remained about, spending most of his time in the house.

As for Dick, his agonies of the night were doubled now. Every bone ached; his mangled flesh throbbed; his tongue, frightfully parched for want of water, felt several times its normal size.

"*Soldado!*" he called desperately, toward noon. In an instant the little *insurrecto* came bounding out of the house.

"Is it forbidden for me to have water?" asked Dick, thickly.

"Yes; unless you agree to be a better servant hereafter."

Dick slowly shook his head, turning his glance away. So he remained until evening, when Colonel Pluma, returning to his quarters, stopped for a moment to look the boy over in silence.

Again Dick spent the night in agony. Around midnight, for a few minutes, a shower fell. Running out his tongue, Carson greedily drew the few

drops that he could secure in this way into his mouth. But his thirst was increasing at a frightful rate.

The next day was a repetition of the former one. Pluma came for a moment, merely to look at him. Dick had made up his mind to die sooner than humble himself before this bullying little brown man. He did not even look at Pluma, who, after a snort, went away.

But during the day a few knots of soldiers dropped in, sitting on the ground before him, eating and—most fiendish of all—drinking before his eyes. Dick had to shut his lids tight, to keep out the tantalizing sight. Seeing this, the little rascals poured water slowly on the ground, that the sufferer might hear it trickle.

Night time found Dick out of his senses at intervals. He was grateful for those lapses of feeling. His torment, now, was beyond all description. Life had ceased to attract him; he hoped only that the end might come soon.

Colonel Pluma did not come near the boy that night. The next morning, however, after breakfast, he sauntered out to the tree.

“ You must have had enough, eh, by this time ? ” smiled the colonel.

Dick did not answer either by look or word.

“ Come, my Americano, you have a strong will, — a fearful one, — but how can you hope to win ? We Malays are patient. What will happen to you if you remain here for twenty-four or forty-eight hours ? ”

“ Death ! ” said Dick. He had no idea how much the effort to speak that word would cost him. His swollen tongue felt larger than his mouth. The sound came as a hoarse whisper, but Pluma understood.

“ Ah, death ! And can you welcome it so cheerfully ? ”

“ Sooner — than — yield my — will — to yours — again ! ”

Colonel Pluma looked incredible. If all Americans possessed the will power of this young specimen of the race, what a terrible people they must be ! But his horse being led around at this moment, the colonel mounted and rode away.

Dick Carson was rapidly dying now. He knew it, and hoped only for a speedy end. He could

never hope to see the dear old flag again, but he could, at least, die proud of the fact that he had not allowed a Tagalo to debase him into a fawning slave.

Toward noon that day a Filipino woman who had passed the house several times, always looking at the victim tied to the tree, discovered that the soldier set to guard the prisoner had his eyes closed in a *siesta*. With a finger across her lips, this barefooted woman stole into the yard, creeping up with mouse-like stillness to the tree. From under the folds of her cotton waist she quickly produced a gourd of water, holding it to the boy's lips, patiently guiding it until thirst-perishing Dick had greedily absorbed the last drop.

“*Por la gracia de la Santa Maria!*” (By the grace of the Holy Mary) whispered the woman. Then she held up a morsel of food.

“No,” uttered Dick, painfully. “But God bless you for that water!”

Casting a frightened look about her, the woman fled. To Dick it seemed like the flight of an angel.

Then there followed the long, hot afternoon.

Dick had looked for the creature of mercy to come to him with another gourd of water. But she came not. As for the ordinary passers-by, they were no longer interested in him. They had seen this stubborn Americano so often that the novelty had worn off.

There was one man, however, a Tagalo of apparently about thirty-five years of age, who passed by not a few times on this Wednesday afternoon. Like most of the men in Bigaa, he wore the Filipino uniform, and was plainly an officer.

Just before dark this man approached the bamboo fence, leaning over it and looking long and compassionately at the boy.

Colonel Pluma did not come home for supper as early as usual. Doubtless he was detained by extra work at the fortifications. But this other man, he of the compassionate face, did come again, just after dark. Dick knew now that he had delirium, for he saw this queer visitant come into the yard, approach the tree, take out a knife, and rapidly sever all the cords that bound the boy to the mango.

What an absurd bit of delirium it was ! For Dick felt himself, freed of the tree, leaning on the shoulder of this compassionate native, who whispered in his ear :

“You are ill ! Very ill ! It is a shame ! Come with me !”

## CHAPTER XIII

## IN OTHER HANDS

QUEER what funny freaks delirium plays with a fellow !

Dick Carson fancied that he was two-thirds led and one-third carried down the narrow palm-bordered street, past little groups of Filipino soldiers and civilians who stared curiously at him and at his conductor, and that he kept on under the guidance of this stranger until they came to the door of a church.

And here was where the curious part of his odd trance came in, for in the church, the chancel and body of which were fitted up with bamboo cots, looking wonderfully like the old, narrow, four-poster beds, he was undressed by his conductor and another Filipino, and laid upon one of these cots between two wounded Filipinos who lay on the adjacent cots. And, after being laid here, the same stranger of the delirium came again to him,



with salves and strips of cotton cloth, and bound up all the sore spots, making them all feel wonderfully more comfortable. After that he drank something which the stranger gave to him, and then the delirium came to an end and a blank followed.

It was morning when Carson again opened his eyes. Now he knew that it had not been a dream at all, but a merciful reality. He still ached, and there was some fever in his veins, — but oh, the bliss of lying there at ease, with no new torment adding! Nor had he had his eyes open more than two minutes when the stranger of the night before approached him, holding a glass of water in one hand.

“Will you drink?” asked the stranger.

“If you please.”

“Now how do you feel?” asked the Filipino, gently; and, wonder of wonders, he was speaking in Dick’s native English.

“Much better, thanks. This seems like heaven, after what I have been through. Last night I thought it was all a part of the fever. But what will Colonel Pluma say?”

"I think he will say nothing," was the quiet answer. "But do not worry about him. You will look to me, after this. I am Doctor Musebo, a surgeon in the Filipino army. You shall be treated here like one of my own people—at least until you are strong again. And now, will you have some breakfast?"

"I believe I *do* feel hungry," admitted Dick.

Away went Doctor Musebo. In a few minutes a Filipino attendant came to Dick's cot with a bit of fried chicken, fried plantain, and—best of all—a small earthen jar of water.

When Dick had eaten most of the breakfast and drunk at least three pints of that blessed water the attendant deftly removed the bandages, bathing the boy's lacerated flesh and applying more of the salve. The bandages once more applied, Dick was covered with a sheet of cotton cloth and left to his thoughts. These were, in the first place, wholly contented ones. Doctor Musebo, whatever the color of his skin, was a gentleman. He was humane, and Dick had perfect confidence that he was not being nursed back to health merely to be the butt of more brutality.

“He’s a brick!” murmured the boy, with grateful enthusiasm.

Then, finding that he could raise himself on his elbow without added pain, he looked about him. At the lower end of the church was the altar, handsomely decorated, and showing also many of the religious figures. Overhead, the ceiling was artistically painted with scenes from the Bible. But from the body of the church everything of a religious nature had been removed. In two long rows down the church were bamboo cots to the number of at least fifty. All but ten or a dozen of these were occupied, for the most part by wounded men. While some of the little Filipinos lay patient in their agony, others moaned loudly. Doctor Musebo was engaged in probing the wound of one little insurgent soldier, who howled at each thrust of the probe.

Before Carson realized how exhausted he was, he sank back, falling instantly asleep. It was in the afternoon when he again opened his eyes. The frantic screams of a man brought the boy’s senses to the alert in a second. Dick awoke in time to see a stretcher being carried past him, a clumsy affair of

bamboo on which rested a blood-covered little *insurrecto*, the first glimpse of whom gave our hero a thrill of sympathy. The poor fellow's right ear was gone, and all that side of the face horribly mangled. His arm, bare from the shoulder, seemed mashed to a jelly and running with blood. For a quarter of an hour after being transferred to a cot he continued to shriek, Dr. Musebo working patiently over him in the meantime. Then, the patient having fallen asleep under a drug, the little native physician came down the aisle. He caught sight of Carson's horror-struck face, and stopped to speak with him.

"Your American shells are infernal affairs," said Musebo, with a dreary smile.

"Was *he* hit by a shell?" asked Dick, awe-struck.

"Yes; he was one of three men. He can hardly live until dark. The other two men were killed outright, and so horribly mangled that their captain could not recognize them."

"It's horrible!" shivered Dick.

"Yes; all war is horrible," answered Musebo, sadly. "Only fools exult in it. But such horrors

are necessary sometimes. It is for us physicians to do all we can to make it less terrible."

"And you believe in this insurrection against the American government?" asked Carson.

"Yes, most certainly, for I am a Filipino and a Tagalo, and my people's hopes are mine. But I wish we might have our freedom without all this bloodshed."

"Then you think the Americans ought to leave the islands?"

"Without a doubt, but they will not. There are people in your country who covet our natural wealth, and they will never leave us, unless we defeat them, or weary them with fighting."

"You must hate me," suggested Dick.

"A true physician never hates the wounded or sick, no matter to what race they belong. But I do not love you Americans. I am frank enough to tell you that."

"Yet you take splendid care of me."

"Because you are ill."

"And after I am well again."

"Then you will be a prisoner of war. You shall not be harmed while you are with me. Some of my

people, I admit, have not yet learned how prisoners of war should be treated. But give us time. We have much to unlearn that Spain has taught us. As for me, I have lived in England, and I have learned how white men regard the rights of men captured in war."

"You have been so kind to me," said Dick, gratefully, "that I already feel as if I loved you. Am I to remain here after I get well?"

"That cannot be unless you are willing to work here in the hospital."

"Say, I'll do it," agreed Dick. "My father—he's dead now—was a doctor in Hong Kong, and I was used to helping him. Oh, you'll find me a famous helper, I promise you!"

"Yet you refused to work for Colonel Plana."

"Because he wanted to treat me like a dog," cried Dick, with spirit. "He could have killed me, and welcome, before I'd have done another stroke for him. But with you it's different. Working in a hospital is a work of mercy, and I agree to do my best for you, until—until"—

"Until when?" asked Musebo, with a smile.

“Until I find a chance to escape, if one comes my way.”

“Then you would leave us if you got a chance?”

“Of course,” said Dick, frankly.

Dr. Musebo smiled and rose. But he held down his hand to the boy, who pressed it warmly.

“You and I are going to have no disputes,” predicted Carson.

An hour later the shell-torn man woke up. His shrieks were now unceasing. A native priest came and administered the last rites. Just before dark the yells ceased; two native soldiers bore out through the church a litter on which lay the dead, ghastly victim of war.

After another night of good sleep the American boy woke so refreshed that he arose, sat on the edge of his cot, and finally reached for his clothing, which lay on the floor.

“You are feeling stronger?” questioned Dr. Musebo, coming toward him.

“Much! I’m ready for work now, as soon as you can find it for me.”

“The first work,” smiled the little doctor, “is to get more strength. Come with me.”

He led the American down the aisle between the cots, around past the altar, and out through a back door. Pointing to a *nipa* house in the corner of the churchyard, Dr. Musebo added :

“ Go over there and see what you can eat for breakfast. When you have done that come back to me. Filomeno ! ”

Answering the summons, an almost black Tagalo thrust his head out of one of the windows of the *nipa* shack.

“ Give the prisoner some breakfast,” called Dr. Musebo.

“ *Bueno !* ” replied Filomeno. “ *Bueno*,” besides being the Spanish word for “ good,” means also “ all right.”

Crossing the yard and clambering up the steps into the shack, Dick found himself in a building of one room, given over to the work of cooking for the patients of the hospital. Over a stout table of mahogany wood three or four inches of earth had been spread. Resting on the earth in a row were a half dozen Filipino stoves. These were curious affairs of unglazed earthenware, shaped like large shallow saucers. In these charcoal was ignited, and



over the glowing coals were set other shallow dishes of the same kind of earthenware. Boiling and frying were done in the same style of dishes. In some of the pots rice was slowly cooking; in two, bits of chicken were being fried brown.

Filomeno faced the boy with an unfriendly frown.

“I suppose you will have to be fed, since the doctor says so,” growled the Tagalo. “If I had my way, all Americanos would be fed on water and air — and little of that!”

Snatching up the scooped-out half of a cocoanut shell, Filomeno, using his fingers, scooped a couple of small handfuls of rice from one of the pots over the fire. Looking at this as if he feared he had been too generous, the cook finally handed it with a grudging air to the captive.

“Eat it, and may it choke you!” he growled.

So hot was the rice that it required much blowing before Dick could hold it in his mouth. There being no forks or spoons in sight, Dick was forced to eat it, native fashion, with his fingers. But it tasted good while it lasted. Having finished, Dick let his eyes roam wistfully from the chicken to more rice. But Filomeno chose to ignore the hint.

"Thank you," said Dick, quietly, setting down the shell at last. "It was very good."

Filomeno gave a grunt, as if displeased. Crossing the yard, Dick reëntered the church and went up to Dr. Musebo, who was bending over one of the brown patients.

"I am ready to go to work when you have anything for me to do," announced Carson.

"Come and let me show you how to put on this bandage."

So well did Dick accomplish the task that Dr. Musebo looked decidedly gratified. From that he passed to other tasks equally well accomplished, even helping during the forenoon in two operations where bullets had to be removed. Dick's new friend seemed to take a real pride in him.

"I suppose Filomeno gave you nothing but rice this morning," smiled the little physician. "After this I will see that you have meat once a day. I am glad I interested myself in you. Certainly you do not deserve the reputation for stubbornness that Colonel Pluma gave you."

"Not when I am well treated," replied Dick.

After that day life became much more pleasant

for him, so far as his own affairs went. There were constantly new arrivals at the hospital. Sometimes all the cots were full, and even the neighboring houses had to be used for the reception of patients. Dr. Musebo, who was the only physician there, had his hands always full of work. There was a Filipino who shared the day work of attendance with our hero. At night there was but one attendant on duty. The wounded came in steadily, showing that fighting between the natives and the Americans was fairly frequent. Occasionally Dick heard the boom of cannon off down by Manila, but never the sound of rifle-fire. It was plain that the Americans were not gaining ground, or they would long ago have reached Bigaa, which was but fifteen miles from the city.

What did this all mean? Of course Dick heard constantly that the Americans were being defeated. It was certain, at least, that his countrymen were not advancing, and this knowledge made him feel gloomy.

“ We have killed thousands of the Americanos. They will not last much longer ! ”

This was the claim made by all the insurgent

soldiers brought into the hospital. The Malay officers stationed in Bigaa, and who occasionally went down to the front, repeated the claim. They were so plainly jubilant that Dick, who at first patriotically discredited their stories, became at last despondent. Day after day slipped by. February went by, and March came in. Once in a while he heard the boom of cannon, but as March began to drag on its length this did not bring the American advance. And so the month of March went on until its remaining life was limited to a few days. Would the Americans never push up into this part of the country?

In the meantime, what was really happening? General Otis had pushed his lines out as far as Caloocan, three miles north of Manila. On the east the Americans held La Loma, four miles from the city. On the south they were four miles from Manila, in sight of Paranaque. Further they could not go until the American commander received more troops. His few regiments held a line shaped like a half circle around the city. If they pushed further out into the country, this line would become lengthened, and therefore weakened. The

first duty was to protect the rich city of Manila from a possible raid by the insurgents, breaking in through some weakened point in the defence. It was impossible to extend this line until more regiments arrived from the United States.

In the meantime, three great transports were coming from New York through the Isthmus of Suez. They carried General Lawton and more than five thousand soldiers. Across the Pacific other transports were speeding, bringing the flower of our young American fighting manhood. Until these troops arrived at Manila it was unwise to attempt more of advance than had already been accomplished. Yet in the United States people who did not understand were blaming Otis for his "weeks of inactivity." Even impatient soldiers in the trenches outside the city were fuming at being held in check.

Everywhere, opposite the American trenches, and only a few hundred yards distant, were the insurgent trenches, thick with the eager little brown men. All day long they watched for glimpses of American soldiers, firing as often as a mark presented itself. Whenever they scored a "hit" it was

natural for Uncle Sam's men to return the savage compliment. Aguinaldo had at that time a hundred thousand Malay soldiers. There were rifles for only twenty-five or thirty thousand of these men. Those who lay in the trenches to-day, eagerly watching for shots at American soldiers, were relieved on the morrow by other Filipinos, who, taking their comrades' guns, were equally anxious to harass Uncle Sam's men in every way possible. To vary matters, and to keep the few regiments of American troops as sleepless and worn-out as could be done, there were furious night fusilades by the insurgents. Battalions of the little brown enemy would dart over their earthworks under cover of darkness, fire swiftly, and give the impression that a general attack was imminent. By the time that the drowsy American troops had turned out and begun to fire, the little rascals would be safe back behind their own works. It was the ability of the Filipinos to relieve their men behind the guns every few hours that made these tactics possible and tremendously harassing.

So well did this succeed that Aguinaldo and his leaders, after the first signal defeat of February 4,

soon began to believe that they were really winning. *Insurrectos*, off duty for a day or two after fighting, circulated up through the insurgent country, carrying with them such tales of victory that every native in Luzon, outside of Manila, looked for speedy victory by the rebels.

Dick Carson, being without military experience, and possessing little better knowledge of the situation than the grumblers in the United States, was to be excused for his despondency, especially in view of the reports of Filipino victories that he constantly heard at Bigaa.

“If I could only get down to the front!” he often sighed. “It would be worth the chance of death just to have one fair try for a dash to the American lines!”

This was the chance that seemed likely never to come. Dick was too obviously an Americano for him to make the attempt to get away from Bigaa, even by night. The country was swarming with Filipino soldiers off duty. He had only to be caught away from his protector to be slain on sight. It was not only from the *soldados* that he had to fear death; most of the women, all of the children

between Bigaa and Caloocan, would have been quick to kill or denounce.

Within the grounds of the church that served as a hospital he was safe. Dr. Musebo's protection there was all-powerful. The wounded Filipinos and those who lived near by knew the tender care he gave to patients. He was admired for it. Yet, at half a mile distance from the hospital, Dick Carson's life would not have been worth a *centavo*.

One night, after a day of more than usually fatiguing work in the hospital, our hero went out into the churchyard for a half hour's indulgence in the cool, sweet evening air. Slowly he paced to the rear of the churchyard. On the other side of the fence were the yards of two native houses. Reaching the fence, Dick stood leaning over it, staring at the darkened houses.

Of a sudden he heard the voices of a party entering the nearer house. The sound of one of those voices made him tingle all over.

Scr-ratch! A tiny point of light, flickering around a match-end, preceded the lighting of a lamp. As the illumination streamed out through



an open window Dick beheld the members of the party.

“Herr Schwarz and three Filipino officers!” choked the boy, darting back and sinking down to the ground. “What treachery is afoot here?”

Then, after an instant of palpitating uncertainty, Dick Carson quivered :

“I’ll find out, if it costs me my life !”

## CHAPTER XIV

## IN COUNCIL OF TREACHERY

DICK's brain fairly buzzed as he lay upon the ground, revolving with lightning speed plans for finding out just what was going on in the house on the other side of the fence.

Had he stood upright, he might have been seen from the house. It was certain that in the reflected light he would have been visible to any passer-by in the street before the church. Realizing all this, he actually wallowed in the dirt in his efforts to hug closer to the ground.

"This won't do," he reflected, after a moment. "I can't hear a word of what's being said. I've simply got to get nearer. Yet how, without being caught?"

It was, as he said, quite useless to remain where he was. Only the murmur of voices came to him. Raising his head ever so little, he peered through the bamboo palings into the next yard. There was

a low banana palm within seven or eight feet of one of the windows of the house.

“If I could only get up into that — up into the foliage!” he breathed, trembling with eagerness.

Desperate as it was, this was the only chance he saw of getting close enough to the little group.

Peering back over his shoulder, Dick’s view took in both the church and the street beyond. For the moment there was no one in sight. Rising to his knees, with a whispered prayer for success, the boy crept rapidly toward the fence. Two or three of the palings were broken; he managed to bend them enough to creep into the next yard.

Now his heart beat so rapidly he was afraid its noise would betray him. But he had started forward; going back was out of the question. In the next yard, as he crept over the semi-lighted ground, he could see the heads of the four men as they sat close to the window. If one of them should turn his head and look out upon the ground, he would be sure to see the prowling one.

The die was cast! Trembling with the dread of discovery, he continued to move forward. It was no more dangerous, now, than going back would be.

Close to the corner of the house Carson halted for an instant. From here he was invisible to those inside. A passer-by in either street, however, was likely to discover him. Waiting only a few moments to still his trembling and quiet the suffocating beating of his heart, Dick crept boldly toward the banana palm. He reached it—placed the palm's trunk between himself and the house, and, shaking almost as if with ague, rose slowly to his feet.

At this moment a burst of laughter came from the house.

“Now's my chance!” quivered Dick.

Grasping the trunk of the palm, he began a rapid, squirrel-like ascent. Up he went, the noise from the men in the house drowning out the slight scratching noise of his climbing. He was up among the leaves now, breathless, flushed, but triumphant. With the nicest care in the world he began to move the leaves so that they formed a screen between himself and the inmates of the house. This done, he had to think of the street. With a little more arrangement, he felt fairly safe from all observation. At the same time, he had a very fair view of all that went on inside the house.





“But you have not yet told us,” observed one of the Filipino officers when the laughter had died down, “how you managed to get out of Manila. We have heard that General Otis and his officers are very strict. I know quite well that some of our own people have tried to get through the American lines to come out to us, and have been arrested for their trouble.”

“Ach! It was easy enough for me,” replied Herr Schwarz, with a little laugh. “I have a pass signed by General Otis, and he knew that I was coming through the lines to Bigaa.”

“He knew it?” echoed all three of the Filipino officers together, staring very hard at the German.

“Ach! Yes! It was a little ruse of mine.”

“Ah! But you have not explained yourself.”

“I will do so, my friends. Well, then, just before you began your insurrection, it happened that a fellow named Limpe, one of my clerks, decided to return to Germany. In a little business that he undertook for me he used the name of Tillerman.”

“He did, eh?” quivered eavesdropping Dick.

“Oho! I think I could guess what that business was!”

“It occurred to me,” went on Herr Schwarz, “that it might be just as well for me to have Limpe keep the name of Tillerman, so I paid him something to ship to Germany under that name. So, you see, there is no record at the office of the captain of the port that any such man as Limpe has sailed from Manila. After the rebellion opened I went to General Otis in a fine state of frenzy, and told him that I had good reason to believe that my poor clerk, Limpe, had fallen into the hands of the Filipinos. I begged him to use every effort to get my poor clerk released by the *insurrectos*, and that credulous old general promised that he would.

“Well, yesterday, as I wanted to come out here, I went to General Otis and told him that I was resolved to risk my own life in order to save my poor clerk. I asked General Otis to give me a pass that would enable me to pass the American lines. He was very much alarmed for me, and did not want to give me the pass. He assured me that he believed I was sure to lose my life if I dared to go out among the Filipinos.”



“Ha! ha! ha!” roared the three Filipino officers in concert, while Herr Schwarz grinned with appreciation of the joke.

“So I assured the old general,” resumed the German, “that I would much rather risk my life than that my poor Limpe should be surrendered to the most uncertain fate. In short, I made General Otis think I was so generous and noble that there were tears in my eyes as he signed the pass. He shook my hand for a full minute — that credulous fellow — and made me promise that, if I got back alive, I would come to him at once and let him know the success of my efforts.”

At this conclusion there was a burst of fresh merriment from the auditors — all except the unsuspected one in the banana palm!

“And that Limpe — have you found him?” demanded one of the laughing Filipinos.

“Well, partly,” said Herr Schwarz, dryly. “Before I go back I shall get a letter from your General Luna in which he will admit that Limpe is one of his prisoners. But your good Luna will also add that he has been informed that Limpe is an American citizen, and that he will have to hold him until

he can investigate that point. So, you see, I will go back and show the letter to General Otis. At the same time I will pretend to give him a little information about the Filipino defences, and then the next time that I want an American pass to get out here it will be the easiest thing in the world to say that I am coming out to make one more effort for Limpe's release. If I need half a dozen passes that excuse will be good for them all."

"It won't if I ever get to Manila with this story!" raged the listening boy behind the banana leaves.

"But now to come to the business that has brought me here," continued the German, helping himself to a fresh cigar from the box that was passed around the table by one of the officers. "I have just received word that my correspondent in Hong Kong has succeeded in chartering a steamer all right."

"Eh? What's that?" muttered Dick, all ears now.

"My correspondent has also succeeded in getting hold of the number of Mauser rifles that you wanted — six thousand."

“ Oh, I’m glad I’m here ! ” thrilled Dick, gazing gloatingly at the unsuspecting Herr Schwarz.

“ My correspondent has also four million cartridges for the rifles. They are hidden in a house on the outskirts of Hong Kong. Both rifles and ammunition will be shipped aboard the vessel at the point and on the date agreed upon. The vessel will clear for Manila with these munitions of war safely hidden in her hold. She will anchor as far out in the bay as permitted to do, and the first very dark or stormy night — whenever she receives the agreed-upon signal — she will slip her anchors and sneak up the bay without lights, landing the cargo near Paombong, as we have already arranged. My friends, you are sure to have the rifles and all the cartridges you can use. There can’t possibly be a failure about the delivery of the goods.”

“ Oh, there can’t, can’t there ? ” muttered Dick, vengefully. “ There may be, if I can escape, or get a note to Manila. And I’ll take three times as many chances, now, for escape ! ”

The clink of glass caught the eavesdropper’s ear. Bending a little lower, Carson saw a Filipino soldier entering the room, bearing a tray on which were

four glasses and a bottle of some kind of wine. With the precision of a waiter the little soldier filled the four glasses, then withdrew. Herr Schwarz raised his glass to his lips, in which example he was followed by his companions.

"Here's hoping," proposed Herr Schwarz, taking a sip of the wine, "that every bullet I send you will go through the body of some American!" And he drained the glass, amid the noisy approval of his hearers.

"Oh, you scoundrel!" shook Dick, glowing with the white heat of honest rage. "You are living in Manila, doing business under the protection of the flag. You pass for an honest man and a friend to the Americans, and get favors as such! Yet you are out here among the enemy, plotting to deliver rifles and cartridges that will be used to shoot down American soldiers! You treacherous rascal!"

"You will be very well paid, my German friend, for the cargo you are going to sell us," said one of the Filipino officers.

"Ach! Not so well as I had expected," replied the German, with a deprecating wave of his hand. "My Hong Kong correspondent had to pay much

more for the goods than I had expected. But no matter! I shall have done you a great service, and you will do me a great service by the sooner ridding the islands of these Americans."

"Perhaps you will make more money on the next cargo that you sell us," hinted another of the group.

"Ach! I hope so, for after all, I am a merchant, and live by the profits I make. I have the matter so well arranged now that I shall be able to deliver you a half dozen such cargoes, if you need them."

Then this quartet, in council of treachery, drew closer to the table, Herr Schwarz studying several papers which his companions showed him. Every one of their remarks was wholly audible to the listener in the banana palm. Many were the details that were arranged within the next quarter of an hour. Every one of them burned into the eager American boy's brain as if seared there by a red-hot iron. He was sure that he would not forget a single important point in the plot that was unwittingly being unfolded to him.

"Hullo!" gasped the dismayed Dick suddenly,

under his breath, as the realization of a new peril dawned upon him. A sound near the front of the house had distracted his attention. Looking in that direction, he saw the soldier who had served the wine coming straight toward the banana palm.

"Did his sharp eyes make me out?" wondered the boy. He began to tremble with fright. It was less of fear for himself, however, than for the dread that he might fail in his cherished idea of getting word of this information to General Otis.

He had eyes, now, for none but the approaching soldier. How fraught with terror those seconds were! For the soldier came direct and briskly toward the palm.

"If he has seen me," groaned Dick, inwardly, "everything is lost! They would order me shot without a second's delay."

He held his breath in very suspense. Would those few seconds never end? Though it all took place in a twinkling, it seemed to the tortured boy like ages before the soldier halted under the palm.

"Who's that out there?" demanded one of the Filipino officers, leaping to his feet and springing to the window to peer out.

Herr Schwarz and the other plotters reached the window almost in the same instant.

“It is I, Felipe,” answered the soldier, from the foot of the palm.

“And what are you doing there?”

Poor Dick, his eyes roving in terror from the soldier to the quartet framed in the window, felt that his last moment had come. Though he was partly screened by the leaves, he felt sure that he could not long remain screened from the observation of so many pairs of eyes.

“I left my bolo here at the foot of the tree this afternoon. That is all, *caballeros*,” answered Felipe, bending over and picking up from the ground a heavy, rather rusty knife which he fastened at his belt. With a salute, he turned to walk away.

“Ach! We are like so many scarecrows!” declared Herr Schwarz, in his loud, laughing voice, and the four went back to their table.

Dick, who could yet hardly credit his miraculous escape from detection, dared not take a good breath for the next full minute. He watched Felipe go out into the street and vanish. He saw the plotters

bending low over the papers on the table. He had learned all he needed to know. It must be now, or never, he felt, if he was to make good his escape. With what trembling he slid to the base of the palm! The journey on hands and knees to the broken palings in the fence seemed never-ending! But he found himself at last in the churchyard. A few yards more on his hands and knees; then, still trembling, he rose to his feet and walked, trying to appear unconcerned, to the back door of the church.

Once inside the door, he tried to still the quivering of his every muscle. There were a few simple things remaining to be done for the patients. These tasks performed with feverish haste, Dick sought one of the empty cots, as was his custom, stretched himself out, and soon pretended to be asleep.

But sleep was not destined to come to him. His brain was busy, busy, busy — revolving plan after plan for escaping in order to get word of Herr Schwarz's plot to General Otis in time.

“Escaping is not likely to be an easy matter,” reflected Dick Carson, feverishly. “I must think



over every step of the affair carefully. The least bungling is likely to spoil all my chances. If those rifles and cartridges get through to the Filipinos through my failure in any way, I shall feel as if I were the murderer of every American soldier shot by them ! ”

He was still thinking over ways and means, his tired head hot with plans that formed only to be rejected the next instant, when he heard a voice at the street door of the church say :

“ This is our hospital, Señor Schwarz. Won't you come in and see it ? ”

## CHAPTER XV

## “ YOU'RE NO FILIPINO ”

FLOP! As quick as a flash Dick Carson turned over on his side. His arm he threw across his face. He began gently to snore. If Herr Schwarz came into the hospital the boy hoped that his screened face would escape recognition.

But his fears were groundless. Herr Schwarz muttered something about not being interested in such sights, and the party at the door passed on.

“ Thank you, my German friend,” grimaced Dick, and in the next moment the mad rush of plans through his brain had begun again. His impatience grew to despair as he realized the probable impossibility of one so palpably American as he was ever covering the long miles to Manila, through a country swarming with suspicious Malays.

In the end, towards morning, he fell asleep. A little after daylight, according to habit, he awoke,

rose unrefreshed, and began the daily routine of tasks. For the first time his mind was far away from that work. It was a wonder that Dr. Musebo did not notice how absent-minded his young captive assistant was.

Towards ten o’clock there came a lull in the work. Dick sauntered outside, crossing the road to sit under the shade of a big mango tree. He wanted badly to think. Hopeless as the problem seemed, he was less willing than ever to give it up.

If he could escape to the American lines he could go to General Otis in person and warn him. But the very importance of the news, which Dick alone of all loyal Americans possessed, made him hesitate over any plan of escape that seemed too risky. If he were killed by a Filipino sentry, or hacked to pieces in pure malice by a party of bolo men who might catch him on the way to freedom, the secret would die with him and Herr Schwarz would succeed in his nefarious plot. If he could not successfully escape, the only other hope lay in finding some way to get a message to General Otis. But this latter plan was clearly more difficult than the former.

Dick's head ached with the impossibilities that rose before him.

"I'd give my life, gladly," he murmured, "if the sacrifice of my life would ensure the news getting through to General Otis. But — oh dear! — it wouldn't!"

Dick looked despairingly about him. It was a lazy hour in Bigaa. The hottest part of the day was coming on, and the indolent natives had already gone indoors, for the most part. There were but four people in sight — all men. The nearest lay lazily on the ground under another <sup>man's</sup> mango tree some eighty feet down the street on the <sup>same</sup> side. The little fellow wore the tattered uniform of a Filipino soldier. A narrow belt was buckled about his waist; on the ground beside him lay a bolo. This little man lay looking up at the fleecy clouds in the otherwise clear sky. He smoked cigarettes one after another, and appeared a picture of lazy, complete comfort.

Dick remembered having noticed the same fellow lounging about on a day perhaps a week before. Now he regarded him more closely, though he did not quite understand why. Soon, however, a look

of astonishment began to creep into our hero’s face.

“ Can it be possible? ” Carson muttered, slowly.

He watched the fellow a little while longer, then, rising, sauntered slowly along to the next mango.

“ *Buenas dias!* ” lazily hailed the little fellow, looking around and nodding. Dick nodded in return, went closer, and indolently sank on the ground less than four feet from the bolo man.

“ I am enjoying my ease,” went on the little fellow, in Spanish. “ I have had much hard work to do lately.”

“ See here,” broke out Dick, suddenly, in a very low but intense tone, “ you’re no Filipino ! ”

“ Ah, yes ; of the Pampanga tribe,” was the answer, given in a voice that sounded indifferent enough. Yet Dick fancied he detected a slight start on the part of the other.

“ No, you’re not,” said Dick, positively. “ Shall I tell you why I know better? ”

“ Ah, yes, if you have the time, and do not find the day too warm,” replied the little fellow, blowing out three or four rings of smoke and watching them wind slowly upward.

The conversation between them was in Spanish on both sides.

“ Well, in the first place,” went on Dick, slowly, after making sure that there was no one else within ear-shot, “ a few moments ago you tried to light a match on your trousers. No Filipino does that, because friction matches are not used here in Luzon, and any native who has grown to the smoking age knows that the match will light only on the box.”

“ You are amusing,” replied the other. “ But you are mistaken. Up in my province of Pampanga we use more friction matches than of any other kind.”

Without attempting to dispute this, Dick went on :

“ Moreover, you’re wearing your belt. That’s an American trick. A native always takes his off when he wants to lie at ease.”

“ What are you trying to make out ? ” demanded the little fellow, turning on his elbow and looking more closely at Carson.

“ *Nang pok illang maru.* ”

“ I don’t understand you.”

“ Of course you don’t, for I spoke to you in Pampanga dialect.”

With a muttered cry of dismay, the little fellow sat up, sending a piercing look at Dick.

“ Lie down again,” said Dick suddenly, in English, “ or you’ll attract attention to us both.”

Without a protest the little fellow sank back upon the grass.

“ So you understand English?” asked Dick, half mockingly.

“ Oh, a leetle bit,” answered the other, speaking very slowly. “ Once I work in Manecla — for Engleeshman — and so learn a little.”

“ Bosh!” retorted Dick, energetically, but without raising his voice ever so little. “ You tell me that you are a Pampangan, and yet you don’t know a word of that tongue, though you get along first rate with English. Now let me tell you something, my friend. What I said to you wasn’t Pampanga — at least, I can’t see how it was, for I don’t understand a word of that dialect myself. Now we understand each other. You look like a Filipino, but you are an American. You can’t deny it.”

Deep brown as the other's skin was, Dick fancied he saw the pallor struggling to show itself.

"There doesn't seem anything left for me," Dick went on quickly, "but to denounce you to the Filipino authorities. If you're a native you can convince them of it easily. If not" —

Dick paused. Though the other looked bravely at him, the secret terror that our hero saw lurking in that face made him wildly happy.

"Are you going to turn me over and have me shot?" asked the other, now speaking in the clearest of English. He gazed searchingly into Dick's eyes.

"Am I going to tear down the Stars and Stripes, rend the folds of that sacred flag, and dance on it?" asked Dick, with blunt irony.

"Why not?" asked the other, with quick, cool contempt. "You must be an American, yet you are serving under the Filipino flag!"

"I am a prisoner," answered Dick, "or you may be very sure that I would not be here. I work for the Filipinos — yes, in the hospital; but sooner than do a thing directed against our flag I'd let them take me out and shoot me. Is that the kind of an American *you* are?"



More searchingly than ever the other gazed into Carson’s eyes.

“ Judge for yourself,” was the answer, finally given. “ I take my life in my hands every time that I get into these togs and come out to this part of the island.”

“ A spy ? ” whispered Dick, thrillingly.

“ Yes.”

“ And an American ? ”

“ To the honor of my mother I hope to live and die as true a one as lives under the grand old flag ! ”

They were looking intensely at each other now, all distrust vanishing like the mist.

“ God bless you ! ” murmured Dick. “ But why did you deny it at first, when I spoke to you. Could you not see that I, too, am an American ? ”

“ Some of our boys have deserted, and are believed to have gone over to the enemy, for pay. At first I took you for a renegade American,” confessed the little fellow, shamefacedly.

“ I don’t know that I can blame you,” replied Dick, soberly. “ But you trust me now ? ”

“ As I would every other true American ! ”

“ You expect to get back to the American lines ? ”

"To-night, or I'm in hard luck, for there's a big battle expected to-morrow."

"There's no knowing how soon we may be interrupted. Speak quickly and truthfully with me," implored Dick.

"I will, old fellow," came the sincere promise.

"Yon are a regular government spy?"

"Yes."

"You report to General Otis?"

"Sometimes, but not often. More often I go direct to the chief of the secret service."

"But you can get a warning from me to General Otis?"

"If I live to get through the lines."

"Have you heard anything about a cargo of arms and ammunition that is either on its way from Hong Kong or about to start from there?"

"Not a word," returned the spy, opening his eyes wider.

"I have. Overheard the plot last night. I will tell you all the details now."

The spy had again thrown himself at full length on the ground. He was lazily sending upward the smoke from cigarettes, as before. Dick carefully

repressed all signs of animation in his face as he went on, that no one seeing them from a distance would imagine the talk of any consequence.

In quick, short sentences our hero detailed the whole of the plot that he had overheard the night before. His fellow-American listened without interrupting.

“Splendid!” cried the listener, softly, when Carson had finished. “This will be worth more to General Otis than all I’ve learned since I first began coming up into this country in disguise. The navy will nip that German’s scheme in the bud as sure as shooting is done with gunpowder! But who are you? General Otis will be sure to ask me dozens of questions about you.”

As quickly as he could, Dick told his new friend all that was necessary about himself.

“My name’s Owen — Nelse Owen,” the spy informed him. “I used to be a sailor, and that’s how I happened to turn up here at Manila. I’m small, and have high cheek-bones, and my hair is dark. That, with a knowledge of Spanish, made it easy for me to play the Filipino, with the aid of a little dye for the skin. But don’t you think,

Carson, we'd better separate now? If we stay together too long some one is sure to see us. With such news as this buzzing in my brain, I don't dare take any chance of getting myself suspected."

"Yes, we'd better separate," agreed Dick. "I'll go back to the hospital. But tell me one thing before I go. There is no danger, is there, that the Americans will be defeated in this war?"

"Danger that *we'll* be defeated?" echoed Owen in amazement. "Oh, I understand. You've been hearing the Filipino side of the story, and nothing else. No, no! Rest easy, my boy. There isn't a chance that we'll be whipped. On the contrary, Malolos is pretty sure to be in American hands before many days are past."

"Thank you. That's the best news I've heard in weeks. And now I'll go."

"Just one word, though," hinted Owen, detaining him. "I can promise you that General Otis will want to know all about you. He'll use every effort in his power to get you out of this fix. Are you kept regularly with the hospital?"

"Yes; under Dr. Musebo."

“ Musebo? Good! I’ll remember that name.”

“ But see here,” whispered Dick, earnestly, “ I don’t want my release, if it comes, managed in any way that will put Herr Schwarz on his guard. Tell General Otis, for me, that I don’t want him to do anything on my behalf that will put the German on his guard in the matter of this plot to land arms. If necessary, I’d rather be sacrificed to the flag.”

As Dick was speaking, the sharp rat-tat of a horse’s hoofs rang out up the street. Turning, he saw a horseman ride into the churchyard, dismount, and hurry inside the church.

“ See here,” whispered Nelse Owen in his ear, “ why can’t you manage to escape through the lines with me to-night. Would you take the risk? ”

“ *Would* I? ” thrilled Carson, his eyes flashing fire at the thought.

“ I’ll try to be around here this afternoon, at two or three o’clock, then. Don’t be disappointed if I fail you, but I’ll try not to. In any case, you’ll mighty soon hear from me.”

Dr. Musebo, bareheaded, could now be seen hurrying out into the churchyard.

"Americano!" he called, then, catching sight of our hero, beckoned him vigorously.

"Now, I've *got* to go," muttered Dick, "and quickly too!"

He started to run.

"You dog!" yelled Owen after him, in Spanish.

Whack! The toe of the spy's boot struck our hero as he ran forward. Whizz-zz! Nelse Owen's bolo cut the air, close to his head, landing in the dirt.

But Dick knew quite well that this bit of acting was intended to deceive Dr. Musebo and any one else who might be looking.

"What was that *soldado* doing to you?" asked Musebo, as our hero pantingly reached the church door.

"He was insulting me, because I am an American," replied Dick. "I suppose I lost my patience, but that was no reason for him to try to lay my head open with his bolo."

"No, it was not," rejoined Musebo, with some indignation. "But you must remember that some of our *soldados* are rather stupid. They are hot-headed, so it will be best for you to remain patient,

no matter what they say. Now, hurry inside. I have hours of work for you. I cannot spare you for a moment more until we are ready to start.”

“ Start?” echoed Dick.

“ Yes ; we are going to the front.”

Dick’s pulses throbbed with happiness at this best of news.

“ There is to be a battle very soon,” went on Dr. Musebo, as they entered the church together. “ You must hurry and pack supplies for me, so that they can be sent down on the train this afternoon. But remember one thing, Americano,” added the little Filipino, impressively.

“ Well, doctor? ”

“ Now that we are going so close to the Americanos it will be necessary for me to watch you. If, from this moment, you make the slightest attempt to leave my side except by my orders, I shall kill you with my own pistol ! ”

## CHAPTER XVI

## DICK AT THE FRONT

DICK's face lengthened instantly at these words.

Dr. Musebo had so far proven himself a good fellow, and a humane man, but he was not of the kind who would tolerate any fooling.

"It looks as if that settles my hope of getting over to our own lines to-night," muttered the boy to himself.

Dr. Musebo led him to an ante-room at one side of the altar. It was this room that served as a dispensary.

"There are the boxes," said the doctor, pointing to two packing-cases. "You know what I will require in the way of bandage cloth, instruments, and drugs. Pack them as carefully as you know how, for you will have to answer to me for any loss or damage. Be as quick as you can about the work."

Obedience being the only course, Dick went to work with a will. The first time he looked up he



saw a *soldado* standing in the doorway, watching him. Musebo, unwilling to take any chances, had placed him under guard.

“ This will interfere with Owen’s plans,” thought Dick, as he began to sort over bandage cloths at a table. “ I hope he’ll understand, and won’t waste any time hanging about here. Besides, if I’m going to the front there may be a splendid chance for me to make a break for my own liberty ! ”

The thought of this, with many inward prayers for the safe arrival of Nelse Owen at Manila with the momentous news, filled Dick’s head as he packed the two cases. It was in the middle of the afternoon that he finished the packing, which he had done with the greatest care. A native carpenter came in and nailed up the two boxes.

“ Sit down on one of them,” directed Musebo, “ until I send for you. We will soon start for the train.”

“ Doctor,” appealed Dick, “ have you any objection to my going outside to get the air for a few moments ? ”

“ Stay where you are,” was the rather sharp reply, and Dick had no choice but to submit.

Fifteen minutes later a squad of bolo men marched into the room. Under the surgeon's direction they lifted the cases, bearing them out to the street door. Here a "bull cart" was in waiting. This clumsy vehicle, which is found everywhere in the Philippines, is a mere platform, without sides, perched on the axle of two very heavy wheels which seldom have tires. The "bull" is the male of the water buffalo species. These animals, huge and somewhat shaggy, are fastened to the shafts by a yoke. Through each bull's nose runs a ring, to which is tied a cord by means of which the driver, walking on the left, guides the great animal. Travel by bull cart is approaching speed when it reaches the gait of a mile and a half an hour. These great beasts, however, will pull enormous loads. They will feed for months upon nothing but grass, but several times a day, when in sight of water, will balk. If allowed to go into the water and wallow a few minutes, they will then submit to being led out and again yoked up. But the bull that is denied his desired bath becomes a very stubborn and even dangerous animal.

After the packing-cases had been put on the cart

four crude-looking stretchers made of bamboo were next loaded on. The eight men who had moved the cases then formed by twos, back of the cart, standing there patiently until Dr. Musebo sprang upon the cart, seating himself on one of the boxes.

“As for you, Americano,” ordered the surgeon, “walk beside the cart and take pains not to lag. Forward!”

With many shouts on the part of the driver, the bull was started. Down the street went the lumbering, creaking cart, the bull paying little attention to the driver's loud talk, and none whatever to the frequent reports of the whip-lash just above its head. People looked on as the doctor's outfit went by, but they did not cheer. The sight of the stretchers made them think too keenly of the other and darker side of war. Out to the end of the palm-bordered avenue, and then across the hot, blazing field to the railway. Here, at the station, a train of a dozen flat cars was being loaded, so many Filipinos being engaged in the work that they frequently got in one another's way. Musebo inquired and found out to which of the cars his outfit had been assigned. His two cases were quickly loaded

aboard. His eight Filipinos and Dick got aboard the car, seating themselves on the floor.

Cases of Mauser and Remington cartridges, seemingly without number, were being loaded on other cars. One car was piled high with sacks of rice. On a handful of this grain the little Filipino soldier can live for a day. But Dick turned away from the loading to look back at the pretty little town of Bigaa. He looked in vain, for it was completely hidden in that dense growth of banana palms and mango trees. Only the tip of the church's spire was visible.

"We have enough cartridges there," smiled Dr. Musebo, pointing to the ammunition cars, "to kill all the soldiers in all your American armies."

"Perhaps," assented Dick, coolly, "if your *soldados* know how to shoot."

"Then you think they do not?"

"I know nothing about it. I have never seen them shoot. But let me tell you, that when our Americans get to shooting, it won't be safe for any of you who shows his head at a distance of a thousand yards."

Dr. Musebo smiled again. Just then the en-

gine's whistle sounded, and the train began to move. Dick, seated on one of the cases, took a long, shrewd look at the intrenchments which Colonel Pluma had been engaged for days and days in constructing. They were, indeed, wonderfully strong affairs. Dick did not believe that even field cannon would produce much impression on them. And each trench was loop-holed, so that the Malays could fire without exposing their heads above the top.

“I'm afraid it will be a tough job for our brave fellows to take those trenches,” sighed Dick, though, when he found the doctor's quizzical regard turned upon him, he smiled back confidently.

It was a beautiful country through which the train now slowly rolled. But for the frequent glimpses of palms and other tropical trees, and here and there a glimpse of a *nipa* house, our hero might have imagined himself in some level, fertile part of the United States.

At other points along the road, as they passed, Dick saw trenches that had been dug, not with haste, but with every care and deliberation, with every detail that could make them stronger and safer closely observed. It is well known to our

War Department that European officers served with the Filipinos, teaching them how to fortify. From Bigaa down, every trench was now completed and in readiness for fighting.

"What's that?" cried Dick, starting suddenly from his seat and listening.

"Rifle-fire," smiled Musebo. "We are now nearing the lines. Ah! Did you hear that?"—as something went siz-zz-zz! by the boy's ear. "That was an Americano bullet. How did you like it?"

"Well enough!" answered Dick. "I'd like to be behind the gun that fired it. But I hear only a few shots from time to time. This is not a battle?"

"No; nothing but a few outpost affairs. To-morrow, perhaps, we will show your Americanos what a real battle is."

The train was now slowing up. It halted opposite a dense woods, the natives who had come down on the train immediately jumping off and beginning to unload. Dr. Musebo got leisurely down to the ground, signing to Dick to keep close at his side.

"Now listen to me," ordered the surgeon. "To-morrow morning we expect the Americanos to

attack us. If they do not, it is very likely that we shall attack them. These litter-bearers of mine will go wherever they are needed, but you will always keep close to me, and help me to dress the wounded. Do not try to get away; do not hesitate to go where I tell you because of danger; and do not disobey me. If you do there will be no time for argument, and I shall do what is necessary."

Saying which, with a smile Musebo touched the holster in which his revolver rested.

The surgical supplies being unloaded and taken into the woods, not far from the track, Dr. Musebo ordered one of the boxes opened. From this he supplied Dick and the litter-bearers with bandage cloths.

It was dark now. A Chino, escorted by a *soldado*, came up, bearing a heavy basket of cooked rice at either end of a bamboo pole swung over his shoulder. Musebo and his party were fed a few handfuls apiece from this stock.

"Come," said the doctor, "we will lie down now. As we are only about a mile from the Americano lines, it will be necessary to tie you."

After Dick had lain down upon the ground one of the litter-bearers produced a cord, with which he lashed the boy's wrists behind him. His ankles were also secured. Lying there, under the gloom of the great trees, Dick looked up at the stars and thought — thought about many things, yet chiefly about the success of Nelse Owen's efforts to get that important news to Manila. Dr. Musebo and his litter-bearers were soon snoring, but the American boy lay awake. He heard "taps" sounded by the buglers of the many Filipino battalions in the neighborhood, and was awake long after that. Just when he went to sleep he did not know, but the next thing that he realized was that some one was tugging at his ankles. He awoke with a start. It was one of the natives, cutting his bonds, while Musebo's voice called:

"Wake up, Americano! It is time for us to be starting."

It was still dark, the bright beauty of the tropical stars undimmed by coming light. Dick rolled over on his stomach to make it easier to liberate his hands. When this was done he rose to his feet, stretching his cramped limbs.



“Forward!” cried Musebo, starting off, and pulling Dick to his side as he did so. The eight natives fell in behind in single file with their stretchers. Their way led to the railroad track, their course south.

“Closer to the American lines!” thought Dick, with a thrill.

On their way down the track they passed a line of trenches, manned by comparatively few soldiers, most of whom yet lay asleep on the ground. A little later in the day some of these brown men would be in their last sleep.

Plodding onward, the little party was passed, every now and then, by some mounted staff officer hurrying to the front. Save for such sounds, and the crunching of their own feet on the gravel, all was wonderfully still. Even the vigilant outposts had taken a rest from “potting” each other.

And so at last they came to another trench. Here there were alert sentries at every few yards along the works. On the ground men lay thickly together, getting their last snatch of sleep, though a few were already astir, kindling cautiously-screened fires here and there in order to boil a

bit of rice or coffee. This was the Filipino front of battle!

“Here we are,” said Dr. Musebo, stepping down the bank into the field at the right. “Now for the music!”

Swiftly on the heels of his challenge, as if in answer to it, sounded an American bugle a few hundred yards to the southward. On the air came the lively, inspiring notes of the “first call to reveille.” Other bugles took it up. A wave of martial melody swept down the lines behind which our khaki-covered men had spent the night. Away in the far distance the call died out on the last trumpet to take it up. Now, over the Filipino camp, sounded the call which the Malays had chosen for the rising note. It was longer than ours, with more flourishes to it. At the first notes the sleepers sprang to their feet, well aware as they were that this was to be a day of battle. From the parapets the peering sentries jumped down, though a few leaned over the works, watching with cocked rifle, ready to shoot at any sign of a camp-fire that might show on American ground.

Over in the east the light was just beginning to

break. Dr. Musebo, who had taken up his ground with his little corps, was saying to Carson :

“ When it is necessary for me to call you to a wounded man, come quickly. But I do not ask you to show your head above the trench. Just crouch low and run to the spot as fast as you can. If you are not hit in the first few volleys you will soon learn how to shield yourself.”

Dick had been nervous ever since his arousing that morning. He had passed through the feelings which every man experiences just before his first battle. He felt that he would rather be dead than prove a coward — yet he wondered unceasingly if he *would* be hopelessly afraid. As he peered over the top of the redoubt, now, he felt a tremulous uneasiness under the belt.

Crack ! Close to him a crouching Malay fired a shot at a man he fancied he saw in the American lines. A few sputtering shots up and down the Filipino trench followed. Over in MacArthur's lines all was now as still as if the Americans had retreated without firing a shot.

Rapidly the light came on, for in the tropics there is but a short period of transition between

night and day. Above the horizon poked the red rim of the sun.

Cr-r-r-r-r-r-r-rack! Over by La Loma, some four miles away, there was a sound like several packs of fire-crackers going off all at once. It was answered by a burst of the same kind of sound, perhaps a little sharper. Over there the Americans had opened up on the Filipinos, who were replying. The battle had opened.

Close to Dick, the Filipino soldiers, discarding their hats, were crowding the trench, watching along the sights of their guns, showing only the tops of their dark heads along the redoubts as they waited. Of a sudden there came a few scattering shots, and then every Malay within sight was working his gun as fast as he could fire. For a few seconds they had it all their own way. But a crash — a sheet of living fire — ran along the American trenches. A fiendish swish of bullets swept by where Dick Carson stood. Several of the little men dropped — some dead, some writhing on the ground with blood streaming from terrible wounds, while others, less badly hit, laughingly set down their guns and crouched back to have their injuries dressed.

“Here!” called Dr. Musebo, pulling Dick after him. They went, almost on their knees, in rapid succession from man to man, passing by some as altogether too badly hurt for any possible aid. All the while bullets were flying over the redoubt, striking men here and there, throwing up dirt in tiny jets, or cutting twigs from the bushes.

Boom! The American artillery, manned by stalwart men from Utah, had opened fire. In a second or so the shell exploded, striking in a group of officers, killing a few and mangling others horribly. There was more work at this point than Dr. Musebo could do. Most of the Filipinos were still firing fast and furiously; but a few, becoming panic-stricken, were crouching down behind the trenches, or, at best, shoving only their hands into sight and firing at random.

Several more shells struck, most of them doing fearful execution. Dr. Musebo, on his part of the line, had more work than five surgeons could have accomplished. His stretcher-bearers were already far to the rear, and it would be some time ere they could return for more wounded men. Now on the air dinned a yell the like of which cannot be

described. It was defiant, exulting, terrifying — the cheer of the United States troops charging.

Over the American trenches swarmed men in brown khaki. On they came, fleet as sprinters, six feet apart in single line, firing, firing, and still yelling. At their first appearance some of the Filipinos turned and fled. Others remained to fire two or three shots, but soon gave it up and joined the fugitives. The rout was general.

“Come on, we can’t stay here,” shouted Musebo in Dick’s ear.

They rose, joining the mad flight. A dozen steps, and Dick fell.

“He’ll think I’m wounded,” flashed through the boy’s mind. So, instead of rising, he writhed and groaned. Musebo, who had halted on seeing him fall, came back and held a cocked revolver at his head.

“No tricks!” admonished the little surgeon, sternly. “If you are not able to keep with me, I shall blow your brains out!”

Up rose Dick, and speeded on, Musebo now keeping behind him. As the Filipinos fled, bullets overtook many of them. Would that American

cheering and firing never cease? How long they ran Dick did not know, but the fugitives came at last to the next line of trenches. Dropping behind the friendly walls of earth, they prepared to make another stand.

But a few volleys were all they fired. Those eager Americans, not content with taking one trench, had cleared it and were now charging the second. It was of no use for the little brown men to dally here. They were losing lives too rapidly. It was as if the shades of all the American soldiers that ever were were raining down bullets from the clouds! The little brown men began to despair. It was of no use to contend, at this point, against these six-foot brutes of men who had no idea of the nice little subtleties of the game of war as the Filipino wished to play it. The second trench was abandoned, almost as soon as the attempt had been made to defend it, and Aguinaldo's army was again in full retreat, followed by the tantalizing cheers and awful bullets of those masterful Americanos. Now the Tulihan River lay before the insurgents. They leaped into it, swam, — some of them drowning, but most of them reaching the other side, — and

getting safe into their third line of trenches before the Americans burst through the woods. Dick and Dr. Musebo were in the flock of fugitives that crossed dry-shod on the railroad bridge.

Here the Filipino officers prepared for their last desperate stand. They had things their own way at last, for the trenches were close to the river, and the Americans, had they attempted to swim the stream under a galling fire, would have lost so heavily that the day might have gone against them. Besides, it was understood that one American brigade had been sent around on the extreme flank to get in behind the little brown men. So MacArthur's fighting-front settled down in the edge of the woods to wear out the dusky foe by sharpshooting. The distance that now separated the two armies was between three and four hundred yards, with the river about half-way between them.

Dick Carson, on first getting behind the trench, dropped down out of breath. Musebo, who had followed with a cocked pistol pointed at the boy's back, sank with him.

"You may thank Heaven that you are still



alive!" panted the little surgeon. "This is a terrible battle!"

"A battle?" echoed Dick, scornfully. "That's what you call it, but *I* should call it a foot-race!"

"The Americanos can never get across that river," vaunted Musebo.

On Dick's tongue there trembled a caustic retort. Prudence made him bite his lips and keep it back. Musebo had been, so far, a just man, but defeat makes its victim savage.

Both sides were volleying again. In the trenches around Dick men seemed to fall at the rate of so many per minute. Dr. Musebo found himself in constant demand, always forcing his assistant after him. Whenever the Malays became discouraged, there would be a lull in the firing for a few moments, but the least provocation would start it up again.

Thus hours passed. Dick, constantly busy, was aware that the sun had crossed the meridian and was moving toward the western sky. Except for this he paid little heed to the flight of time. Men were dying all around him, but the Filipinos were holding pluckily to their last stand, and the Ameri-

cans were not crossing the river. Incessantly busy, Carson had ceased to wonder whether he was afraid. He had no time for fright. Yet his escapes were close and marvellous. Several times, when he had unwittingly exposed his head above the redoubt, bullets had flown so close that he was sure his ears had been touched. Shells had exploded so close as to strike down men standing within a yard of him. It is a marvel how some men escape death in battle.

“Those two cannon the other side of the river are giving us the most of our trouble!” exclaimed a Tagalo major, and, after peering through his field-glasses over the top of the redoubt for some moments, he called out loudly :

“I want a dozen men with Mausers — men who have served in the Spanish army, and who are sure they know how to shoot. Let no blunderers offer themselves.”

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when more than forty of the little brown men came crouching close to the officer. He questioned them until he had decided upon twelve of the applicants as sharpshooters.

“You see those cannon,” he said, pointing down the railway track. “Station yourselves where you can get the best view of them. I want you to pick off the gunners. Get them as fast as you can. Make it so hot and deadly for the men about the guns that they can’t stay there. We must silence those pieces!”

Standing himself close by a tree behind the trenches, the major saw through his glasses that his little sharpshooters were doing their work fairly well. Two of the gunners fell and were carried off. One of the stretcher-bearers engaged in this work was also shot. So fearfully close did the Malays manage to send their bullets that it was plain the gunners at the American pieces were becoming “annoyed.” At this juncture up came a little American colonel with a squad of picked men. Under the direction of their colonel these men began to locate and pick off the Filipino sharpshooters. In a very short time four of the brown major’s detachment had been laid low by American bullets, and Dr. Musebo was having a busy time of it.

Recognizing that the American officer must be

one of high rank, the Malay major ordered his men to try to pick him off. Bullets whizzed past the colonel's ears, threw up the ground spitefully at his feet, hit men around him, but the little American officer seemed invulnerable. He was Colonel Harry Egbert, of the Twenty-second Infantry, one of the oldest and most valued officers in the American service, and doomed to fall on the very next day, while dauntlessly leading his regiment.

"You are wanted, Señor Doctor, on the other side of the track," called a little *insurrecto*, hastening on a crouching run to Musebo.

"Very good," said Musebo, rising quickly from a man whose wounds he had just finished binding. "But we should have more of my craft here. There is more than I can do! Come along, Americano."

With Dick in his wake the little doctor started. It was not far to the track, which was covered by a thick parapet of earth.

"Bend low, and be quick across here!" cried Musebo, as he himself dodged down to keep out of the way of the bullets, which were here as thick as hail.





Gaining shelter below the railway embankment, the little doctor turned to see how our hero got by. In the next instant Musebo uttered a cry of amazement and rage.

For he was just in time to see Dick Carson spring up on the parapet, sway there an instant in the storm of bullets, then leap to the track beyond and start on a mad race for the American lines.

Just ahead of Dick a shell exploded, throwing dirt in his face. Around him the air was full of the hum of bullets. But Carson minded it not. He meant to reach the American lines or die in the attempt.

## CHAPTER XVII

## OF THE STUFF OF HEROES

“It’s now or never — to be free or dead!” quivered Dick Carson, as his feet struck the ground outside the parapet.

A clever runner at all times, he fairly outdid himself now. By the time that the exploding shell filled his mouth and nostrils with dirt he had sprinted a full fifty yards from the Filipino redoubt.

Never slackening for a second, Dick blew the dirt out and got his breath for an even better burst of speed.

So quickly had it all happened that Dr. Musebo, with his eyes on the boy at the moment of the break for freedom, was the first to see and realize it.

“Stop him! Shoot him!” cried the little surgeon, directing the attention of a score of the brown soldiers to the fugitive.



Cr-r-r-r-rack! rang out the rifles, in an irregular volley. Dick heard the bullets go speeding by him with a sound like the rising of a wind.

Dr. Musebo bit his lips with vexation.

“Can’t you do better than that?” he cried angrily. “Fire! Keep firing until you bring him down. He must never escape. He can tell the Americanos too much about us!”

By this time hundreds of Filipinos could see the figure flying down the track. Divining at once that something was wrong, all turned their rifles in that direction.

It was a fearful ordeal, with the little steel-jacketed bullets thicker than hornets and twice as mad. Three or four times within as many seconds our hero felt something touch him. Whether he was wounded or not he did not know — hardly cared. There was no time to stop.

Almost dead ahead of him he could make out the flashes from the American riflemen standing near the field-pieces. He was under fire from front and rear!

A hundred yards, a hundred and twenty-five, a hundred and fifty! He was covering the ground

at wonderful speed, yet to Diek's tortured mind, while he was the centre of that brisk fire from scores of rifles, the time seemed like ages to him.

Not far ahead, now, was the railroad bridge. If he could reach that alive — dart over it — he would be on the American side of the river.

Onward he raced, as if even more than the Filipino army were behind him. It was marvelous that he did not drop, riddled through and through. Time after time in those few seconds he felt again the same sensation of being touched. Now it dawned on him what it meant. His clothes were being pierced, his flesh scratched, perhaps, but what did he care? The goal was in sight — coming every instant nearer!

A moment later, Dick, with every nerve of vision strained on that little group of Americans across the track, saw the colonel order his men to cease firing in his direction. They had made out a fellow-countryman, and now the little colonel was enthusiastically waving him on.

Carson was almost at the bridge. In another moment his feet would touch the planks. Though

his breath was coming shorter, he tried to redouble his burst of speed.

Then something rose in front of him — the figure of a little Malay soldier, another and another. They seemed to spring from the ground faster than the dismayed boy could count them. There were six of the Tagalos, all between him and the bridge. Armed only with bolos, they had been hiding in the grass to harass a possible American charge over the narrow structure.

Now, heedless of American bullets, they placed themselves in Dick's way. The nearest raised a bolo, aiming a vicious blow at the boy's head. Dick barely dodged, planting his fist in the Malay's face and staggering him. But the next Malay dealt Dick a blow on the side of the head that sent him to the ground between the rails. They piled upon him as if bent on executing him on the spot. But one of their number interfered.

“Don't harm the *muchacho!*” he cried. “The Americanos don't dare fire on us while we have one of their people a prisoner. We'll carry him back. We can reach the trench safely if we take him there alive.”

Acting on this advice, two of the Tagalos yanked Dick to his feet. He fought and struggled with the energy of desperation, but they were too many for him.

“Fire! Shoot these rascals! Never mind if you do hit me!” he shouted, hoping that he could make the American officer hear.

Colonel Egbert and five or six of his men were now racing toward the bridge, bent on the rescue of this gallant young American citizen. But the Filipinos, snatching up their prisoner, proved themselves more fleet of foot. A hail of Filipino bullets greeted the little rescuing party. Colonel Egbert would not have stopped for that, but he saw that the race would be a hopeless one. So he halted his men at the bridge as he saw the little brown men and their retaken captive near the Filipino trench.

“Up with him!” and Dick went over the hateful parapet with as little ceremony as if he had been a sack of rice. He was back in the enemy's lines, a prisoner again, and a doomed one, he did not doubt. But he had made the effort for life and freedom, and a good stout effort, too. Let what must come now.

As Dick was seized by a half a dozen men at

once, Dr. Musebo hastened toward him, whipping out his revolver.

“So this is the way you repay my kindness, you ungrateful Americano dog!” shouted the little surgeon. “You shall die for it, and by my hand that once saved you!”

He cocked his pistol, taking quick aim, but in that one instant the little surgeon cooled down.

“No, I will not punish you now. I will wait until I am cool and can be just,” he muttered.

Then, nodding to two of the bolo men to approach, Musebo added:

“You two, since you have no guns with which to fight, take this prisoner to the rear. Keep him there until I am able to come to him to-night. Do not hurt him; remember that he is my prisoner, and that I alone must decide his fate.”

“Come along, then,” said one of the pair, roughly, clutching Dick’s sleeve and brandishing his bolo in a way that discouraged the idea of disobedience.

Flanked on either side by these new custodians, Dick was hurried up the track. American bullets beginning to drop around them too thickly, Dick’s

conductors darted down the embankment at the left of the track, proceeding afterwards in more safety. A half a mile away from the redoubt they halted, finding comparative safety in a little gully.

"Sit down on the ground," ordered one of the pair. "If you try to get on your feet without the order from us, it will be your last moment of life. It is a shame that the doctor should forbid us to finish you at once!"

"I shan't try to escape until I get a better chance than this," retorted Carson.

His captors, being in enforced idleness, began to smoke. There was a deep shade in the gully that was grateful to the boy, who had been exposed for hours to the full glare of the sun. Resting on his back, he soon fell asleep. The sounds of battle, raging a half a mile below, mingled with his dreams.

"He has a nice throat," whispered one of the Tagalos, looking at the other, in a sinister way. "I would like to see the blood spurt there. And to think that I have been carrying a bolo for months, yet have never had a bit of practice at lopping off a man's head at a blow. Eh?"

“Don’t you think of it,” advised the other brown man. “Dr. Musebo used to be General Luna’s physician, and he has great influence with the general. Added to that, the general has proclaimed that he will order shot all *insurrectos* who do not obey orders.”

“But we were told to kill the *Americano* if he tried to escape. Whose word can be taken but ours?” persisted the first Malay, picking up his bolo and beginning to feel the edge.

“Ah, and that would be very well, if the *medico* believes us,” replied the other, shrugging his shoulders. “But if our word is not believed, then it might be very dangerous for us to brave the wrath of one who has General Luna’s ear!”

“Bah! You are too cowardly!”

“Not a coward, but I believe in being prudent.”

Utterly exhausted, Dick slept on, unaware of the plot that was brewing against his life.

“Well, then,” agreed the reluctant one, “if you are determined upon it try your bolo on the *Americano*’s neck.”

Rising, the first Tagalo went closer, poising his weapon and calculating the blow with the air of one

about to undertake a praiseworthy experiment. He was about to strike, when a new thought entered his head. What if his comrade should expose him to the doctor?

"On second thought," said the murderous one, coming back and sitting down, "I think I will humor the doctor."

"You are wise," rejoined his comrade, dryly.

Dick did not awake until it was almost dark. When he did, he sat up at once, listening eagerly to the few sputtering sounds of a dying-out battle. He felt, at once, that the Americans had not crossed the river.

"Your countrymen do not seem to like fighting," jeered one of the Tagalos. "They are retreating below the river."

"That's a lie," was Carson's contemptuous inward thought, but he wisely held his peace.

By dark everything had quieted down. The stars shone on a bit of dark landscape, jarred only by an occasional shot.

An hour later Dr. Musebo and his stretcher-bearers came along, walking to the spot when one of Dick's guards hailed them.



“Now I have time to attend to you, you ungrateful Americano,” cried the little surgeon, harshly. “Do you know what General Luna ordered me to do with you? He told me to have you shot. I have seen enough of blood, however, for to-day. I am going to show you a little mercy.”

Then, turning to his bearers, Musebo ordered them to tie the boy to a tree and to give him as severe a flogging as they cared to do. This command was hailed with a shout of glee. Carson was quickly stripped from the waist up, tied with his face to the tree, and bamboo sticks began to play a ferocious tattoo on his back. He had all but fainted when the little doctor stopped the punishment and permitted him to lie on the ground.

“If you are grateful,” said Musebo, sternly, “you will thank me for sparing your life. If you ever again try to escape I pledge my word to you that I will have you shot for it. Now we will tie your hands and feet, and let you go to sleep for the night.”

Sore in body, disconsolate at heart, our hero got very little sleep that night. Despite the

warning, he was as much determined upon a dash for freedom as ever.

Before daylight Dr. Musebo aroused him. The surgeon waited for orders to take his corps forward. These orders came at last, the little party moving down the track just after daylight, after the sounds of battle had recommenced in most vigorous fashion.

As Dick came once more in sight of the scene of yesterday's battle his heart gave a great leap for joy. The Americans were on the northern bank of the Tulihan River, cheering and firing like fiends.

The Filipino retreat had begun!

## CHAPTER XVIII

“ ON TO MALOLOS ! ”

“ MAKE haste ! ” cried Dr. Musebo. “ There will be many men hurt, now that we are running. We shall be needed ! ”

He set the example himself by running down the track to meet the fugitives, through whom a storm of iron was passing with dreadful havoc.

But a Filipino officer, coming up on a galloping pony, intercepted them.

“ *Medico*, you are ordered to travel to the rear as fast as possible ! ” shouted the officer, as soon as he got within hailing distance.

“ But I am needed down there, ” protested Musebo, pointing to where his tribesmen were stubbornly retreating before the fiercely-pressing Americans.

“ It is General Luna’s order that you go to the rear, and keep out of all danger. Dr. Bicerba has just been killed. If you fall, there will be no

surgeon to look after our wounded. We will send the worst of the wounded to you. That is General Luna's order."

"But my stretcher-bearers?"

"They may go to the front. You cannot. To the rear!"

With a queer compression of his lips, the gritty little surgeon, after sending his bearers forward, turned back, saying:

"Keep ahead of me, Americano. I shall have no time to bother with you if you balk."

Now that American soldiers had taken on the gait of victory, nothing could stop them. Though the little brown tribesmen fought with the desperation of despair, they could not stem the tide of the enemy. Polo fell into the victors' hands. Other near-by villages were abandoned by Aguinaldo's followers. As they retreated, the Malays made frequent halts, firing from behind the dike ridges of the rice fields, from behind the roots of trees. Clumps of bamboo swarmed with them. A few of the more daring took to the shelter of the foliage high up from the ground, firing from these unobserved posts until American soldiers

came close, discovered them, and tumbled them out of the trees like so many squirrels. It was the retreat of a brave army, but none the less a hopeless, though gradual fleeing.

By noon the little doctor was far to the rear, our hero with him. A hospital train of three box cars and a locomotive had been provided by General Luna. To this bearers brought such of the wounded Filipinos as could be brought from the firing-line. But most of the Tagalo wounded fell into American hands, and were much better cared for in the big hospitals at Manila.

As the insurgents gave ground, Musebo's hospital train steamed slowly back. Dick, in the intervals between work, could, by gazing down the track, watch the slow but resistless advance of his fellow-countrymen.

When night fell the hospital train was a little distance above Meycauayan. The next morning, Tuesday, the Filipinos were driven out of that place. Through the day the forces led by Luna fell back on Bigaa and the surrounding country. Here were the magnificent trenches built by Colonel Pluma and his associates. With these fine forti-

fications the place was like a Gibraltar. Tuesday night Dick and the little doctor were back at the church-hospital in Bigaa. The Filipinos were confident. Though they had suffered reverses, they could never be prodded past Bigaa. Here they would make their stand, give up as many of their lives as needful, and the Americanos would be hurled back from this impregnable position.

It had been found needful to abandon more and more of the wounded to the Americans. Few but officers had been brought back, and Musebo, now that he was once more in his regular hospital, did not find his time largely taken up. Tuesday night a large group of Filipino officers gathered in the churchyard, and Dick, listening from the doorway, learned that they had no expectation of further defeats. While small bodies of the insurgents had been left near Meycauayan and other near-by places to harass the American advance, the greater part of Aguinaldo's army had been drawn back to Bigaa. Most of the Filipino officers were quiet, after their four days of defeats, but none the less confident that at last the tide of American victory must now ebb.

Dick went to sleep that night with the knowledge that his countrymen were but a few miles away. He was up just before daylight, listening for the first sounds of battle. Just after daylight he heard the volleying begin. It came nearer, nearer, nearer ! A staff officer who looked haggard with anxiety rode up with an order that the hospital and its patients should be loaded on a train as speedily as possible.

“ We are not losing — we can’t be ! ” cried Dr. Musebo, incredulously.

“ No,” said the officer, “ but General Luna wants the hospital further to the rear.”

Bolo men swarmed into the hospital, giving their services in such numbers that but one trip was needed to carry all the wounded and the hospital appurtenances to the track, nearly half a mile away.

These had got no further than the door, when another swarm of bolo men, led by three officers, entered the church, snatching down the altar decorations and the holy images, and carrying off the priestly vestments by armfuls. Books from the library, the church records, were carried off.

Even the religious pictures and stained-glass windows were wrenched from their places and taken away. Dick, standing by the door with the little doctor, saw this. He felt that the holy place was being desecrated. He saw other droves of bolo men going through the houses, snatching everything that had been left behind by those of the frightened inhabitants who had already fled further north. Sheaves of rice straw were placed in the houses, all ready for the incendiary match should a retreat from Bigaa become a necessity. Later on he heard it charged that the American soldiers had burned the town, looting the churches and houses. There was nothing left for the conquerors to have looted, had they been so inclined. The thousands of bolo men who swarmed at the rear of the Filipino lines attended to the looting, and under the orders of their own native officers.

All this time the volleying was coming nearer. The streets were thronged by scared women and children, fleeing to the fields to the north. A few shells, thrown by the American artillery, burst in the town. That showed how near Gen-



eral MacArthur's forces were, and the last of the populace fled.

“ Come on,” said Dr. Musebo, gruffly. “ We must go to our train.”

Hardly had they reached it when the engine began slowly to roll the cars back up the track. Women and children, already footsore, and shaking with fright, pleaded to be taken aboard, but this was denied them. The part of the populace that did not fight must look after itself.

Early in the morning the American troops reached the trenches at Bigaa. They went over them with the greatest of ease, and found the town burning fiercely from one end to the other, hardly a house escaping the conflagration.

Nothing seemed able to stop the American troops. Guiguinto was taken, though the little insurgents again fought with the keenness of despair. Friday night saw General MacArthur's little army in sight of Malolos. “ President ” Aguinaldo, his “ cabinet ” and “ Congress,” took a special train in haste for San Fernando, fourteen miles north, where they established the new “ capital ” of the Filipino “ republic.”

And the church from which this "government" had fled was given over to Dr. Musebo. Here he established a large hospital, now overflowing with wounded Malay officers and some wounded men. Dick and the other attendants were forced to work almost without sleep.

"Here we stop, whether to live or die!"

That was the boast of the Tagalos on that Friday night, after nearly a full week of continuous, stubborn, and truly splendid resistance. Malolos must never fall. Its defences had been strengthened, and here the greater part of Aguinaldo's army, under General Luna, was now concentrated. Besides the riflemen, there were bolo men almost without limit. As fast as a rifleman fell, a bolo man took his place, using the same gun. Aguinaldo might lose a thousand men in battle, but what did it matter? He could replace them as fast as they fell!

Against Aguinaldo's twenty-five thousand riflemen, backed by legions of bolo men, General MacArthur had employed only about twelve thousand Americans, but they were the flower of our people's manhood. MacArthur could not replace his losses in battle. Aguinaldo could. That week

of splendid fighting was not the least glorious page in the annals of American military history.

Friday night General Luna and some of his staff came to visit two of the Filipino colonels who had fallen wounded and were in the hospital. Their visit brought there other Filipino officers. General Luna stopped at the doorway of the church as he came out, his officers forming about him. He turned to Dr. Musebo, who had followed him. Dick, lurking in the shadow under a gallery, heard what was said.

“ *Medico*,” directed the general, “ I have ordered a train to be ready for you at the station. Between now and two o’clock in the morning I want you to move on board that train all of your patients who can stand being moved.”

“ Surely, general,” protested Musebo, with a ring of bitterness in his voice, “ you do not intend to give up Malolos to the Americanos.”

Despite the fact that the little doctor was a favorite of his, Luna frowned heavily.

“ You had no need to say that, *medico*. No, I do not intend to give up Malolos. Here we make our most desperate stand. We will never give the

city up to the Americanos while there are enough of us left to fire a hundred rifles; and you know how many thousands of men I have at my command. But, in the case of your patients, among them are some of my best officers. I would not take the slightest chance of having them fall into the enemy's hands. More than that, when we are attacked the Americanos will use their artillery. A few shells dropped in this church might cause the death of many officers whom I cannot spare."

"I will begin to move the patients at once, *mi general*," replied Musebo, saluting.

One of the officers whispered something in Luna's ear. The general listened, nodded his head, and again turned to the surgeon.

"*Medico*," he went on, "you have an Americano captive with you."

"Yes, *mi general*, and I am making him most useful to me. He knows well how to dress wounds."

"That may be," replied General Luna, with a shake of his head, "but you can surely find among my men one who will be as useful to you as this accursed Americano."

“ Then what do you wish me to do with him ? ”

“ If we successfully defend Malolos to-morrow,” replied Luna, slowly, “ we can decide afterward about the Americano. But if Heaven *should* will it that we retreat, this Americano would only hamper us. I do not like to have people from the enemy with us in our times of ill luck.”

“ Then you wish me to leave him behind, that he may fall into the hands of his own countrymen ? ” inquired Musebo.

“ Yes, but *dead!* ” replied the general, decisively. “ *Medico*, in case we have to retreat to-morrow, my orders to you are to promptly kill this white *muchacho*. Let his carcass lie where it falls, for his countrymen to learn how we regard them.”

Dr. Musebo bowed, then, straightening up, saluted like the soldier that he was.

“ I will obey, *mi general*, though it goes against the grain.”

“ I am confident that I shall win to-morrow, however,” said Luna, moving off.

## CHAPTER XIX

## “APRIL FOOL” ON AGUINALDO

No Filipino who was at Malolos then will forget that April 1st as long as he lives.

Though Aguinaldo had moved his capital to San Fernando, he had hoped and expected to save Malolos from the clutch of the “Yankee invader.” But our troops came forward with such a wild rush, firing such fearfully well-aimed volleys, that the Filipinos, used to defeats by a continuous week of them, broke and fled, and their first “capital” was speedily in the hands of the Americans. A few shells were dropped, there was a little desultory fighting in the streets, and Malolos was indisputably ours, the ground littered by dead and badly wounded Filipinos, while all who could get away were fleeing to the northward, most of them to Calumpit and Quingua. It was a grim American perpetration of “April fool” on the little Malay presidente.

To Dick Carson, however, the affair was tragically the reverse of a joke. He had determined to try to hide, in the hope that his countrymen would be in the town before he could be discovered. As if penetrating that design, however, Dr. Musebo had ordered him, the night before, to sleep on the ground, just outside the church door, where he would be constantly under the eyes of a pair of sentries. Kept busy, however, in helping move the wounded to the hospital train, Dick was not permitted to lie down at all until nearly three in the morning. The church-hospital was empty, save for the presence of Musebo and some of his litter-bearers, who were waiting to attend to the wounded of the morning. Utterly tired out, Dick caught hardly forty winks of sleep. Naturally, his fate at daylight, in case the Filipinos lost the day, filled his mind.

At daylight Dick was aroused by a shove from Musebo. He sprang up, performing whatever duties were required of him, but he felt half dazed. The battle began two miles further down the line, and was hardly begun when it was over. Some of the wounded had been brought in on the backs of

their fleeing comrades. These were quickly dropped on stretchers.

"We are defeated," said Dr. Musebo, mournfully. At the same time, with a queer change of color and a strange look in his eyes, he drew his revolver, cocking it. He turned, for an instant, to see that all the stretchers holding wounded men had been picked up, either by his own men or by bolo men. Again he turned to Dick.

"It is time for me to be off, Americano," he said, in an odd voice, to our hero. "You heard General Luna's order to me last night. I am going to obey."

With a hand that trembled slightly—for he was not at heart vicious—the little doctor raised his pistol and took aim. Dick did not think it worth while to run, for he had learned that the little *medico* was an excellent shot. But the boy's heart turned to ice as he steeled himself to bravely face his executioner.

Whizz-zz-zz! A bullet that some excited American soldier had shot high from a distance went singing past our hero's ear. It landed with a spiteful thud in the shoulder of a bolo man who held the rear end of one of the stretchers. With a howl



the wounded man set down his end, taking to his heels like a flash.

Not daring to hope, Dick Carson sprang forward, seizing the abandoned handles of the stretcher, and turning his back on the *medico*. With a gulp in his throat, little Dr. Musebo looked at his intended victim.

“ The boy is doing a work of humanity,” he choked, and shamefacedly let down the hammer of his pistol and returned it to his holster.

“ To the train, as fast as you can go, all of you,” shouted Musebo.

There was a scurrying of feet as the wounded were borne away at a trot. Dick Carson, lately within an inch of death, thanked Heaven for that inspiration and its fortunate result. They reached the train, after a quick flight down the road, and the wounded were lifted up on to flat cars, the train starting immediately.

Not looking at the doctor, Dick went to work in trembling haste to dress the wounds of the man he had helped to carry. From that wounded man he went to another. When he took a look at the *medico*, Musebo pretended not to see him.

"He's changed his mind, I hope," murmured Dick, still palpitating with the narrowness of his escape and the uncertainty of the near future.

Calumpit was reached, and the work of transferring the wounded was begun. They were moved to another train, which was to bear them to San Fernando, where other native physicians would look after the sufferers.

"Make haste," said Musebo, approaching our hero as he was engaged in the work of moving the wounded. "I am ordered to Quingua, and you, of course, will go with me. We go back as far as the Bag-bag River on the train that brought us here."

"That looks as if the work of killing me had been indefinitely postponed," reflected the boy, with a thrill of joy. "If General Luna doesn't see me, I may be all right."

His surmise proved correct. At the Bag-bag River, where insurgents by scores were already busy cutting one of the spans of the great steel bridge, to prevent the advance of the Americans, Dr. Musebo was provided with a horse which he rode, while his attendants, Dick included, were made to walk. Shortly after noon Quingua, a pretty little

Filipino town with an imposing stone church, a few other stone buildings, and some scores of *nipa* huts, was reached. In the church the upper end, near the altar, was still reserved for purposes of worship, but the other half of the edifice, near the street, was turned over for hospital purposes. Here Dr. Musebo installed himself. At first there was nothing to do, but after a couple of days wounded began to come in from outpost affairs and brushes with American scouts. Nothing more was said about General Luna's order, and Dick proved himself as useful as he had done in the same routine of hospital work at Bigaa and Malolos. But our hero was conscious that a stricter watch than ever was kept on his movements, for the purpose of nipping in the bud any design on his part to escape.

Curiously enough, Carson's thoughts were less on escape than on the subject of Herr Schwarz's plot to land arms for the insurgents.

“I wonder if Owen got through with the information? Whether General Otis believed he warning, and acted upon it?” These fruitless conjectures ran through his mind a hundred times a day

during his captivity at Quingua. The Americans, meanwhile, were resting at Malolos, and in that vicinity. For three weeks after the taking of Malolos no forward movement was attempted by General MacArthur's troops. Men were being refreshed by rest after their arduous fighting under that tropical sun, and needed supplies were being forwarded up the one-track railway. There were frequent brushes as the outposts of the two armies kept in touch with each other, and that was all. Quingua, an important post on the left wing of the insurgent army, and defended by at least a thousand insurgents, was sure to be the scene of important fighting when the next forward move was started.

On about the tenth day at Quingua Dick received a sudden shock. He was standing in the doorway of the church, looking down the street, when he caught sight of a European coming up the street on a native pony, escorted by four Filipino soldiers who had brought him in from one of their outposts. Across his saddle still hung the white flag which he had used in approaching the Filipino lines.

A closer and harder look, as the European rode nearer, revealed in him Herr Schwarz.

“*Gracious !*” shivered Dick in the doorway. “*He* mustn’t see me here !”

He drew in behind the wall, trying hard not to look concerned, in order that Musebo nor any of the other hospital men should notice his uneasiness. Yet he could not move away altogether ; a fascination held him there, an attraction mingled with curiosity.

Next door to the church was a stone building in which lived Colonel Porlae, then Filipino commanding officer at Quingua.

“ Welcome, my dear friend ! But how did you manage to get out here to us again ?” Dick heard Porlac call as the horse stopped outside the *com-mandante’s* house.

“ By my flag of truce, of course !” laughed Herr Schwarz.

“ But how did it happen that that suspicious old General Otis permitted you to come through his lines ?”

“ The same old excuse,” laughed Herr Schwarz, as he swung himself down from his saddle and

grasped the Filipino's hand. "I have come through to try once more to secure the release of my German friend whom you hold prisoner. Ach! You Filipinos are a hard-hearted race. Ha! ha! But I have something more important to tell you. To-night you may expect that good news, at the time and place we arranged some time ago."

"That means that the shipload of arms and ammunition is to be landed to-night!" quivered Dick, who had overheard every word. "Did Nelse Owen get through with my message? Oh, if I could only get out of here, there might still be time to make sure!"

Herr Schwarz had gone inside the *commandante's* house by this time. His further conversation with Colonel Porlac was not audible.

Trembling, dizzy, and sick, Dick turned to go about his work, fearful of attracting attention to himself. Dr. Musebo, a half an hour later, called him to help in dressing the wound of one of the patients. The little *medico* soon looked at the boy in surprise.

"Your hand is shaking, *muchacho*."

“Is it?” queried Dick, starting, and watching his hands more closely.

“Yes; you tremble all over. Are you not well?”

“Not as well as I might be, I suppose,” answered the boy, gladly catching at the excuse thus offered.

“Your people can hardly expect to have good health in this climate,” said Musebo, grimly.

Did he suspect? Dick wondered with an apprehensive thrill. But when the work was finished the *medico* merely suggested:

“Now that you have nothing more to do for a little while, go and lie down on one of the cots. A *siesta* is needed in this climate.”

Selecting a cot on which he was not likely to be seen by a stroller-by from the doorway, Dick threw himself down, turning his face away from the street. He was glad of the chance to lie down, be quiet, and think. His mind ranged over plans of escape. The more he thought of them the more hopeless they seemed. For him to get the warning through to General MacArthur in time, he must escape during daylight. The

country around Quingua was alive with rifle and bolo men, and an American caught away from Musebo's protection would be killed before any questions were asked. It was out of the question to escape, Dick felt, with a throb of bitter disappointment. Glad as he would have been at any time to escape, his freedom at this critical moment would be three-fold more precious.

"But probably Nelse Owen got through safely, and has carried the warning to General Otis," the agitated boy kept repeating to himself.

Yet once in a while this objection cropped up:

"If Owen is alive and safe he would be sure to be still prowling through the Filipino camps. It's strange that I've never seen him since that day when I told him so much!"

Tortured by the suspense, Dick really worried himself into a slight touch of fever. When he rose to go about his duties his face was unduly flushed.

"The Americano does not stand the climate well," thought Dr. Musebo, watching his young captive. "After all, General Luna's order was quite unnecessary. The fever of Luzon is likely to get into his veins. He will not live, then, to go



north of Quingua with us, if the Americanos should drive us from here.”

Not once during the afternoon did our hero take the risk of going to the door.

“ If Herr Schwarz should see me here it would be all up with me,” Carson realized. “ My only safety will be in ‘ lying low ’ until that German is out of the town.”

Just before dark Musebo slipped out of the church to go over to the *commandante's* house to pay a call. Dick watched him covertly, with a good deal of misgiving. What if he should mention to Herr Schwarz that he had an American boy captive — an American boy named Carson?

Just after dark Musebo returned. He hardly glanced at our hero. On the little *medico's* face was a look of happiness and exultation.

“ He has heard that the cargo of arms is to be landed to-night,” thought Dick, sick at heart. “ Heaven grant that he and the rest are deceiving themselves ! Six thousand more rifles in the hands of the Filipinos would mean the loss of a good many more Americans ! ”

Shortly after eight o'clock Dick sought out a bam-

boo cot near the door and lay down, after moving the cot to a position where he was not likely to be observed from outside. Hour after hour passed. Dick could not sleep, nor did he care to, though he lay with his eyes closed. There was sound of high revelry over in the *commandante's* quarters. Had they already received news of the safe arrival of the rifles and ammunition from Hong Kong? Dick began to feel certain that this must be the explanation of the merriment, and the thought made him feel hot and cold by turns.

Towards midnight, when the town of Quingua was utterly still, except for the occasional sound of a voice from the *commandante's* house, Dick tried to go to sleep. Just as he was falling into a light doze he heard the sharp rat-tat of hoofs coming down the street. Some one was riding hard, as if the bearer of momentous news. Coming nearer, the gallop was brought down to a trot. Just as the horse stopped an excited voice rang out :

“ *Commandante! Señor Commandante!* ”

“ Well? ” roared Porlac's voice from the house.  
“ Who is it? ”

“It is I—Major Bustamente. I bring you disquieting news.”

There was a sound of scrambling feet, a dismayed exclamation in German. In that stillness these disturbing sounds were brought distinctly to Dick Carson’s alert ears.

“Ach! What is wrong?” demanded Herr Schwarz’s voice. It was plain that he and Porlac had run out into the street to hear the messenger’s news.

“That cargo of arms”—began Major Bustamente.

“Yes, yes! Speak faster, stupid!”

“It has been seized by an Americano war vessel!”

His face radiant with joy, Dick Carson sat bolt upright on his cot, uttering inwardly the one word:

“Glory!”

Then, sinking down again, for fear of being watched, he lay there, throbbing with happiness as he listened to what followed.

“Seized?” fairly screamed Herr Schwarz. “Ach! That is impossible! Man, you are dreaming.”

“It is a fact, nevertheless,” asserted the mes-

senger, disconsolately. "Was I not there? Did I not see it with my own eyes? Did I not take part in the fight by which we tried to drive off the *Americanos*? A dream, perhaps,—but I have seen a dozen of our men die to-night in the effort to save your ship from the *Americanos*!"

"Tell us what happened," suggested Colonel Porlac, who, while his voice rang with disappointment, was yet the coolest of the three.

"Well, we lay hidden at the mouth of the river, as agreed upon," replied Bustamente. "Your ship, Señor Schwarz, sailed as close to the coast as it could. A small blue light was burned over the bow. Everything seemed clear of the meddling *Americanos*, so I ordered my men to push off in the *bancas*. We would have been alongside, and in two hours would have had the last of the cargo on shore, where the bull-carts were in readiness. But, just as our *bancas* were starting out, two launches from a cove a half a kilometre north of us steamed suddenly out. They belonged to that accursed *Americano* navy! Straight for your ship they steamed, and your captain, seeing them coming, turned and tried to get away. But each of

the launches opened fire with a cannon, sending so many shot over your vessel that your captain stopped his engines to escape being sent to the bottom of the bay.

“Well, Señor Schwarz, as you may imagine, I was perishing with anger at this unlooked-for annoyance. I had two hundred men; sixty of them had rifles. I ordered them to open fire on the launches. What a fire of Mauser bullets we sent at them! The launches turned their cannon on us. *Diablo!* How those Americano sailors can shoot! In a twinkling they had sunk two of my *bancas*, and forty of my poor fellows were in the water.

“Just at that time there came from up the coast a big Americano war vessel, throwing her searchlight over everything and making the dark bay almost as light as moon-time. Of course there was nothing more to do, so I picked up as many of my poor fellows as possible from the water, and we hastened back into the river. We saw Americano sailors pour aboard of your ship, Señor Schwarz.”

“It is not *my* ship,” denied the German fiercely. “No one can prove that. I took good care not to appear in the business.”

“There has been some traitor!” exclaimed Major Bustamente, wrathily. “Everything about the adventure showed that the Americanos had been warned in advance. *Almirante* Dewey’s sailors were waiting for the ship, and it seems they knew just where to wait, and when to expect the ship.”

“The one thing certain is,” said Porlac, heavily, “that we do not get the rifles and cartridges for which we had hoped. Señor Schwarz, I offer you my great sympathy.”

“But of course you will make good my losses,” cried Herr Schwarz, eagerly. “I did my best. It was not my fault that the plan failed.”

“Make good your losses?” echoed Colonel Porlac. “No, no, my friend, that is just what we cannot do. You charged us a very high price for those rifles. You charged us so much for them that we agreed to pay only in case the cargo was delivered safely into our hands. That was our agreement; you will remember it. Therefore we can pay you nothing.”

“It is a terrible loss to me!” cried Herr Schwarz, a sob choking his voice. “I had a fortune invested in that cargo!”

“ We are very sorry for you, but it cannot be helped,” replied Colonel Porlac, gravely. “ Come inside, my unfortunate friend, and have a glass of wine to cheer you.”

Dick Carson, who had heard every word of the high-pitched conversation, was, as you may imagine, quivering with delight.

“ The whole cargo in Dewey’s hands ! ” he palpitated. “ The Filipinos have lost those guns ! That’s the news of a lifetime ! Hurrah ! hurrah ! *hurrah !* ”

## CHAPTER XX

## AGUINALDO HEARS SOMETHING

“ARE you going to sleep forever, *muchacho*?”

Standing over the boy's cot, Dr. Musebo gave him a vigorous shake.

It was morning, with the sun more than a half an hour up. Dick, filled with happiness, had sunk into a heavy, dreamless sleep that might have lasted until noon, had it not been for this interruption.

“I'll get up at once,” promised the boy, rubbing his heavy eyelids.

“You would better make great haste,” was the rejoinder, “for, after we get through with our regular work here, we have a journey to make.”

A journey? Dick thought it best to ask no questions, so, springing up, he drew on the few garments that he had laid aside for the night. A refreshing dip in water at the rear door of the church, and he was ready for work. As he came through the church, however, he heard Herr



Schwarz's voice in the street. For the life of him the boy could not resist the temptation to go close to the street door, that he might overhear what was being said. He even managed to get an unsuspected peep at the German's face.

Herr Schwarz looked as haggard as a man who had not slept in many nights. He appeared utterly crushed by his commercial disaster. He was exchanging a few words with *Commandante* Porlac before mounting his pony to ride back to the American lines.

"Glad he's going," muttered the American boy, with a thrill of relief. Then, through fear of making Dr. Musebo suspicious, Carson hurried back to his tasks.

Later in the morning he discovered the nature of the journey. There was much sickness among the Filipino soldiers in the intrenchments along Bag-bag River. Acting under orders, the *medico*, accompanied by a stock of medicines on a bull-cart, was going along these lines, examining the sick and prescribing for them. When all was ready, at about eight in the morning, Dr. Musebo mounted a pony, Dick riding on the bull-cart with the boxes of medi-

cines, while a Chino prisoner drove the water-buffalo.

It took them until nearly eleven to make the trip. Dr. Musebo found much to do, at least one in every four of the insurgents proving to be ill. The progress along the line was slow. Dick had all he could do to hand out the medicines as ordered. It was hot work, too, as the cart was without awning, but the little brown *soldados*, glad to get the medicines, showed their gratitude by offering Carson water as often as he wanted it.

All of a sudden the medical party heard cheering ahead. There were shouts of "*viva el presidente!*" soon after which a little Malay, in gorgeous uniform, cantered into sight, followed by a single mounted staff officer.

It was Aguinaldo, but he was no longer the pompous, complacent little fellow that his people had known a few weeks before. The happy look was gone from his face; there were lines of care there, and, though his attire was still striking, there were signs of less care being now bestowed upon it.

While Aguinaldo frequently bowed in answer to the cheers of his followers, his gaze was never-

theless fastened upon the earthworks. Every yard of their length he inspected. Close to the *medico's* cart he drew rein, beckoning to his staff officer to come up and listen to what he had to say about the weakness of the trenches at that point.

Glaring as the sun was, Dr. Musebo uncovered, suspending his own work until the little "president" should pass by. Noting that Dick kept his hat on, the *medico* signed to him to take it off. Good-naturedly Dick obeyed, though he walked to the shade of a tree near by.

Suddenly Aguinaldo looked up. As it happened, his glance fell upon the American boy. In the first instant the insurgent leader gave a slight start. Then he recognized our hero.

"So you are the boy whose life I saved at Malolos?" he said abruptly.

"The same," answered Carson.

"You have nothing to complain of as to your treatment among us?"

"Nothing, except that I was made a prisoner unjustly in the first place."

"Yet Colonel Pluma told me that he had to

give you up, because you were intractable," said Aguinaldo, eying the boy closely.

"That was because he treated me brutally. I doubt if Dr. Musebo has any complaint to make against me."

"How is that, *medico*?" questioned the presidente, turning to Musebo, who saluted respectfully as he replied:

"The prisoner has been very useful to me, and a very cheerful worker. I can only complain that he tried to escape during the first day of the fighting at the Tulihan River."

Aguinaldo's questioning glance turned to the boy.

"Of course I tried to," spoke up Dick, with spirit. "What prisoner won't escape when he gets a chance? I'd do it again, if the chance came, but it doesn't seem likely to do so."

If Aguinaldo had been closely examining the boy whose life he had saved as a hostage to fate, Dick's scrutiny of the Tagalo was no less keen and thorough. Emilio Aguinaldo was now at the middle stage of reverses. He had been forced from his capital, and had been obliged to admit that his soldiers, though far more numerous, were

no match for the masterful Americans. He had seen the insurgent regiments from which he had hoped for the most scattered like chaff before the reckless, resistless charges of the American infantry. When the conflict was again resumed in good earnest it seemed unavoidable that the insurgent army should be driven further back into the island. Indeed, it was but a question of a few weeks or a few months when the once boastful insurgent army should be broken up into little guerilla bands, chased hither and thither through the deepest jungles of Luzon by Otis' tireless columns.

"Your Americanos fight well — much better than I had expected," said Aguinaldo, with a wistful smile, and sighing as he spoke.

"They would fight much better if there was any need for them to," was Dick's prompt rejoinder. "They are the best troops in the world. Never have they lost a war."

"They will lose here, though," said Aguinaldo, his face brightening up a trifle, as if he partly believed that hopeful prediction. "They have driven us back, lately, but that is almost at an

end. Your Americano army has already lost thousands of men in battle. Your people will soon become tired of fighting us at such a cost."

"Don't you believe that," said Dick, seriously. "I know the American people better than you do. They will spend thousands of lives, millions in money, before they would withdraw from a war before the day of complete victory. Now, will you be offended if I give you a little advice?"

"A wise man always listens to advice — follows it, if he finds it good," replied Aguinaldo, again smiling slightly.

"My advice is to stop this awful slaughter by seeking peace."

"Peace?" echoed Aguinaldo. "Have I not sought it? I still pray for it. There can be peace on any day that the Americans are ready for it. All I ask is for the American army to leave these islands. Let General Otis say that he will stop fighting. Let him call in his troops, embark them on ships, and leave us to work out our own destiny. That will bring peace, and an honorable one."

"That kind of a peace," answered Dick, shak-

ing his head, "will never come. America sees her future work here. She will carry it on, whether through peace or war, but she would much prefer peace. Our people hold no ill will toward yours. Cease the fighting to-day, disband the insurgents, and in a week you would find all forgiven and forgotten."

"No, no, no!" cried the little presidente, passionately. "Leaders may be killed in battle, our armies may be scattered at times, but fighting will never stop as long as there are American soldiers here and the American flag flies over Manila. My people have entered upon this war to fight it out to the end, though it takes twenty years."

"If you live much longer, then," rejoined Dick, "it will be to repent the folly that brings grief into the homes of thousands of Filipino families."

"Stop, you dog!" ordered Dr. Musebo, darting at our hero. "You are annoying his excellency."

The staff officer, who had been sitting mute in saddle behind the presidente, now raised his whip as if he would ride forward and lay it over the shoulders of this presumptuous Americano.

“Do not harm the *muchacho*,” interposed Aguinaldo. “He is merely saying what he has heard his countrymen say at Manila. Alas! They do not understand us, and this war must go on for a long time yet. There will be thousands of sad homes in the United States, and the people there will blame me for it. There will be thousands of Filipino families from which father and brother will be absent in the grave. I shall be fortunate if my own people do not reproach me. Good-by, Americano, and remember what I have told you to-day.”

With a sign to his staff officer, Aguinaldo cantered away.

“You have made his excellency unhappy,” cried Dr. Musebo, angrily. “Why did you speak at all?”

“Because your presidente first addressed me.”

“Then why did you not speak with more consideration for his excellency’s feelings?”

“He is the enemy of my country, and I told him only the truth. This would be a happy day for the Filipinos if he would heed my advice and disband the insurgents. Sometimes one can get wise advice even from a boy.”



“Or a fool,” sneered Musebo. “I would advise you to hold your tongue after this.”

After that the little doctor remained sulky toward our hero. Though a friend of General Luna, Musebo was also a warm admirer of Aguinaldo, and hated the boy for having disturbed the serenity of the presidente.

It was toward the middle of the afternoon when their work among the sick was done. Musebo gave the word to turn about and return to Quingua. On the way back the *medico's* attitude of dislike continued.

“It looks as if I shouldn't be as great a favorite with him after this,” thought Dick, grimly, and with some uneasiness. “If he receives orders again to do away with me he's likely to obey.”

It was almost dark when the little church at Quingua was reached. Dick had no sooner followed the doctor inside than the latter turned upon him with:

“*Muchacho*, the water is low in our barrel. Go to the well and get enough to fill it.”

This was the first time Carson had been ordered to perform menial work. Without a word

he snatched up the bucket that was used for carrying water, and went out into the back yard where the well was. As he neared the well he saw a bolo man hovering near by. A few steps further on Carson saw that the fellow was looking at him closely. Dick kept on to the well; the bolo man walked closer also. They came near enough to see each other clearly. Dick gave a start of amazement.

“Nelse Owen?” he whispered quiveringly.

“Yes,” replied the other, also in a whisper. “I am here on purpose to see you. I got your message to General Otis.”

“I was sure of it, for I knew the arms were seized.”

“And I have a message for you — a long one.”

“Don’t give it to me just now, then,” begged Dick. “That is, if you can wait. I have been sent out to get water in a hurry. If I am too long away suspicion will be excited, and we are both likely to be caught.”

“I can wait,” said Owen, composedly. “Go at your work. I will prowl around until I get another chance to talk with you.”

Splash! went the pail into the well, as Owen sauntered slowly off. Hauling it up by the rope, Dick hastened toward the rear door of the church. A message for him! What could that mean? Dick hardly dared to think, but kept at his work with breathless haste until he had emptied the dozenth bucket of water into the barrel. His face was now flushed with the exercise. Dr. Musebo noted it, and said, gruffly:

“*Muchacho*, I did not tell you to kill yourself. Remember that if you are not more careful you will get the fever. Now go out into the air for a little while; but be careful not to cool too rapidly.”

Eagerly enough Dick obeyed the order. Setting down the bucket, he went out through the rear door, walking slowly toward the well, until he again got a glimpse of Nelse Owen in the shadow of a clump of trees.

“Have you time to talk now?” whispered Owen, moving to our hero’s side.

“Yes, and dying with curiosity to know what your message can be about.”

“How do you like your captivity?” asked Owen, carelessly.

"No better than ever."

"You would escape if you could?"

"Oh, if I only had the chance!"

And Dick looked eagerly at the spy.

"I haven't seen you for some days," went on Owen. "That wasn't my fault. I was sent down to the South Line, to do some work that I was better fitted for than any one else in the government service. But to-day General Otis ordered me to find you and to thank you for the message that you sent him. It resulted in a splendid haul. General Otis also ordered me, in case you wanted to escape, to do all in my power to aid you."

"Escape?" breathed Dick, rapturously. "But how is it possible? Had I been able to find a way, I should have been in the American lines long before this."

"It is possible," rejoined Owen, coolly. "It will also be full of danger."

"Danger? What do I care for that, as long as there is a single chance of getting away?" protested Dick, eagerly. "To be back in Manila, among my own countrymen,—no longer a prisoner! Oh, it seems too good to think about! And I

could give our American generals some news that might be worth their while. To-day I was at the Bag-bag River. I saw the fortifications, and have a perfect description of them in my head."

"That will be useful, decidedly so," replied Owen. "So, then, you are ready to make the attempt with me? It will be an attempt full of peril. Once we start, there can be no turning back. It will be either escape for us both, or death at the hands of butchers!"

Dick's eyes were shining like stars.

"We'll make the effort," he whispered, "come what may! Give me your orders, I beg you!"

## CHAPTER XXI

## "FILIPINO DICK"

INSTEAD of replying at once, Nelse Owen stood looking searchingly around him in the darkness.

Stirring as Dick's first thrill had been over this unlooked-for prospect of precious freedom, it was only now that the real sensation of the thing came over him. He began to feel incredulous. Could it be possible that he was to have a chance to escape? Could it be true that General Otis had sent aid to him? Was Nelse Owen a real, tangible being? Or was he some whimsical creation of a dream?

Dick pinched himself, rubbed his eyes. Slowly he began to feel certain that he was really wide awake. But it was all so queer, so exciting, that he caught his breath with a sharp sob.

"What is your best time to slip off unobserved?" whispered Owen.

Dick reflected for a moment.

"Probably about nine o'clock. Unless Dr. Mu-

sebo has something unusual to keep him up, he will be on his cot by that time, and fast asleep. Then I could saunter out, as if intending to get a breath of fresh air before turning in.”

“ Then at that hour shall I look for you in the road, just below the churchyard gate? ”

“ If I’m alive and able to walk ! ” vibrated Dick, passionately.

“ Don’t fail me, then,—and above all be careful. If you excite the least suspicion it may run my neck and yours into a noose ! ”

“ If anything happens that I can’t get out just at nine, I’ll be along as soon after as possible,” promised Dick. “ Don’t fear my disappointing you,” he added, with a wistful smile that caused Nelse Owen to grasp his hand and wring it.

“ Now you’d better get back, in case you’re expected,” whispered Owen. “ I’ve got plenty to do to take up my time. As to the arrangements, don’t worry on that head. Leave it all to me. I’ve made every preparation that was possible.”

With a last warm handshake, Dick turned and moved slowly toward the church. Once inside, he found Dr. Musebo bending over a wounded man

who had fidgeted off the bandage over his thigh. Dick glided swiftly to the side of the cot, silently helping the *medico* to replace the bandage.

“Are you feeling better?” asked Musebo, turning to the boy when the task was finished.

“I feel less feverish,” answered Dick, and he spoke the truth, for he felt as if turning to ice all over.

There was more work to be done. He moved about, helping Musebo in every task, thankful for this abstraction from the wild thoughts and gruesome doubts that kept assailing him. Yet, despite this work, the time dragged wretchedly. Would the early evening never pass?

“He will not last much longer,” thought the Tagalo, when, his hand accidentally touching Carson's, he found how cold it was.

At last the work was over. It was a little past eight o'clock. Dick sought the cot nearest the door, thrilling with thankfulness when he found it unoccupied. He sank down upon it without removing any of his clothing, turned on his side, and pretended to sleep. There was no clock in the church; his watch had been taken from him when



he was first arrested at Malolos. But the sentries gave the call “ all’s well ” at the passing of every hour, and that must be his clock.

How the minutes dragged ! Lying there on his cot, alternately hot and cold, Carson discovered that there were a good many more than sixty seconds in a minute ; that the dolt who declared there were but sixty minutes to an hour should have been confined in a mad-house !

At last he heard the sound that sent the blood jumping through his veins :

“ *Numero ocho, aler-r-rta !* ”

It was the cry of the sentry at the door of the church, and was intended only to show that the sentinel on post number eight was awake, and alert. But to Dick it meant the peal that summoned him to liberty or death.

He sat up, rising slowly in order not to excite suspicion. Up the street he heard the faint sound of number nine declaring that he was “ *alerta* ” also.

Dick was trembling so that, for a moment, he did not dare trust himself to make the effort to stand.

“ This won't do ! ” he muttered, angry with himself. “ Steel yourself, old fellow ! Are you going to be a coward when there's a real man waiting outside, ready to risk his life to save you ? ”

With a resolute wrench he stood up, all the trembling vanishing. Slowly he walked toward the door, pretending to yawn. He walked through the doorway, feeling as if he were in a dream, all the while nerving himself for whatever might happen.

The sentry saw him coming, and halted in his pacing to look at the boy. It was a situation that required explanation.

Dick pretended to yawn once more, then, stifling the gape, he said to the insurgent :

“ It is hot in there. I am afraid I am going to have the fever. The *medico* told me to walk a little way down the street if I wanted to.”

The sentry looked at him more closely, but Dick stood the ordeal without flinching, going so far as to yawn again while under inspection.

“ *Bueno !* ” (all right) said the sentry, beginning once more to pace his beat.

On toward the gate walked Dick, not daring to

show too much haste. In the shadow of the stone wall our hero saw a man lying on the ground. It was not difficult to recognize him as Nelse Owen.

“Well, I see you’re here, all right,” was the spy’s whispered greeting as he arose and stepped to the boy’s side.

“Yes; I have got so far all right, but if I’m missed there will be a first-class row.”

“Come with me,” ordered Nelson, reaching out his left hand and grasping the boy by the wrist. In his right hand the spy swung his bolo jauntily. Stepping briskly, Owen conducted his friend along until they came under the suspicious eyes of the next sentinel.

Before the latter could speak, Owen spoke up confidently :

“I have my orders, or you would not see me in such bad company as this Americano has proven himself to be.”

“You have your orders?” demanded the sentry.

“That is what I said, comrade.”

“Whose orders?”

“*Commandante* Porlac’s. Perhaps you are also going to inquire what the *commandante*’s orders

are?" hinted Owen, with just a tinge of haughtiness.

"No, no," replied the sentinel, quickly. "If you have the *commandante's* orders, that is enough for me. I hope you are not going to bring the Americano back with you."

This was said with a sinister leer.

"I shall be disobeying orders if I do," smiled Owen, with a significance that was, of course, lost upon the sentinel.

"You see how easy it is, so far," whispered Owen, when they had gone a few yards down the still, almost deserted street. "Keep up your grit. The worst of it is yet ahead of us."

A little further along they came to a crossing of the road. Without hesitation Owen turned to the southward. They were halted by the sentry here, but permitted to proceed after a moment.

"Is that the last one?" whispered Dick.

"Not by several scores," was the low reply. "Here we are!"

Turning swiftly, to make sure that there was no one in sight, Owen next led his captive swiftly under the trees to the left.

“ Duck low, now, and creep after me,” whispered Owen, letting go his clutch on Carson’s wrist. “ If we are seen, it is all up with us ! ”

Ahead of them stretched a marshy rice field. A fringe of bushes running out into the field offered partial concealment to them. Crouching low, they darted through these bushes as fast as Owen dared to set the pace. After proceeding some two hundred yards they came to a great, spreading tree, under whose dark shadow the spy abruptly halted.

“ Now we shall be busy, if the things haven’t been found,” muttered Owen. Getting down upon his knees, he crawled a half a dozen paces, halting and fumbling in the roots of some jungle bushes.

“ All right, so far,” he whispered, turning and holding up a bottle.

“ What is it ? ” Dick wanted to know.

“ Bottle of flesh stain. I’m going to change you into a Filipino.”

“ You couldn’t,” dared Dick, smiling for the first time since he had left his cot at the church.

“ A Filipino like myself,” rejoined Owen, dryly, as he regained our hero’s side.

“ Oh ! That’s different. Success to you ! ”

“Get off about all the duds you’ve got on you,” ordered Owen, peremptorily. “Get pretty well down to your skin, for I want to make a rather thorough job of you.”

Disrobing in a fever of haste, Dick quietly submitted himself to the bath which Owen, by means of a saturated cloth, applied to his skin. Wherever that cloth touched a brownish hue was left in its trail. The stuff dried quickly, with a queer feeling that made the boy’s flesh twitch.

“Now for your hair,” said Owen at length, producing a small vial.

“What’s that?”

“You’d be a healthy-looking Filipino, with your color of hair,” was the retort. “I’m going to turn it black for you. This is a job for a barber, but I’ve got the nerve to tackle it.”

Tying a cloth around the boy’s forehead, that none of the dye might drip down on the skin, Owen went at his task with a will. In about fifteen minutes he had Dick’s locks as black as a raven’s wing, and the stuff was quite dry.

Turning, Owen again went in among the roots of the bushes. He came back with an undershirt, and

trousers, and blouse of blue and white striped drilling — stuff of the same cloth that had once been used for Spanish tropical uniforms, and which the Filipinos had now adopted as their own military livery.

“ On with the rig,” ordered Owen. Dick got into it as quickly as ever boy was dressed. A tattered straw hat he placed on his head.

“ Now I guess you can come over and tote the rest of the outfit yourself,” grinned the spy, leading the way, as he spoke, to the clump of jungle.

From the place of concealment he drew forth a bamboo canteen, cotton strap and all. Dick placed it over his right shoulder as he had seen the Malays do.

“ Here’s something else you’ll need,” chuckled Owen, holding up to Carson’s view a rather rusty bolo.

Dick snatched at it, twirling it around in his hand in a true-to-the-life fashion that made Nelse laugh.

“ I see you’ve had your eyes open,” he added. “ Now, if you feel as if you had all your grit with you we’ll start on the really perilous work that’s ahead of us to-night.”

"I'm ready for it, you may wager," declared Dick, promptly. "What is it?"

"You've got to play bolo man with me until we get past the Filipino pickets — if we're destined to have such luck — and over to the American pickets."

Dick's eyes shone with passionate fire.

"To be with the Americans once more! Ah, that is worth risking death a dozen times over! But wait one minute, if you can."

As Dick spoke, he bent over to pick up his shoes, which had been discarded during the work of the last half-hour.

"You can't put them on," negatived Owen, promptly. "Those shoes are too hopelessly Americano."

"Leave them behind, then?"

"Yes, unless you want to be suspected. Give 'em to me. I'll hide 'em where they're not likely to turn up for a day or two."

Taking the shoes, Owen went back to the jungle from which he had taken Carson's disguise.

"Now," he announced, coming back, "we're ready, all but for one detail. That may help us, if we get into a tight box."



Spreading Dick's own discarded jacket and trousers on the ground, Nelse made a half a dozen sharp slashes in them with his bolo. Around the edges of the cuts he sprinkled what was left of the skin dye in the bottle.

“ That'll do for blood-stains, in the dark,” he commented, with grim enjoyment of his joke. Tying up the clothes in a compact bundle, he tucked it under his arm, adding :

“ Come along, Filipino Dick. Be careful about speaking, from now on. Better still, don't say anything at all. Yet if you *must* speak, use Spanish ; on no account say a word in English. Leave all the talking to me, if you can. I'm a Pampanga, while all the sentries we are likely to pass will be Tagalos. Since you caught me so nicely a while ago, I've taken pains to learn a little of the Pampanga lingo.”

“ I'll follow you,” quivered Dick, “ and do as you say in everything.”

“ That's right. But don't hold that bolo so gingerly. Grab it as if you meant to bag an Americano or two.”

Piloted by his friend, Dick retraced his steps

out of the swamp, his bare feet sinking deep in the gluey ooze. They were soon upon the road that led to Malolos, the present location of MacArthur's division.

"I'm finding every sharp stone in the road," whispered Dick, before they had gone far.

"Don't think that ought to discourage you," was the cheerful reply.

"It doesn't. But my feet will be bleeding badly before we get to the American lines. What will Filipino sentries think if they see a Tagalo who is too tender to walk barefooted?"

"Oh, I'll tell any inquirers," replied resourceful Nelse, "that you got hit in the feet the other day with fragments of a bursting shell, but that nothing can dampen your ardor for the Filipino Republic."

"Nothing can dampen my ardor to get away from it," smiled Dick.

He felt utterly happy, now. He knew, at last, that it was no dream. The first step for freedom had actually been taken. The others might involve more peril, but for that he did not care at this moment. He had broken away from his direct



DICK AND NELSE OWEN STOPPED BY A SENTRY Page 317



captors. It was but an hour or two of suspense, now, after which he would either be a free man again or a corpse.

How hot the sultry tropical night was! Their brisk, silent tramp along that muddy road brought out the perspiration in liveliest fashion. He was so warm that he halted, glad to find a drink of water in the bamboo canteen swinging over his left hip.

“Tastes good, doesn’t it?” whispered Owen, wiping his own lips after a similar treat.

“I hope there’s water enough to last for a couple of hours. This excitement is making me feverishly hot.”

“Forward, now!”

Nelse Owen moved so rapidly down the road that Dick had fairly to trot in order to keep up.

Out of the darkness, so close to them that both jumped, came the low, sudden challenge:

“*Para! Quien vive?*” (Halt! Who goes there?)

“*Amigo!* (friend) replied Owen, as both Americans came to a startled halt almost at the gleaming muzzle of a Mauser rifle.

## CHAPTER XXII

## A NIGHT OF DEADLY DANGER

CLICK! Around them all was so utterly quiet that the cocking of the rifle sounded thrice as loud as it really was.

"Come forward, one at a time, to be questioned," rejoined the sentry.

As cool as if it were all a rehearsal, Nelse Owen obeyed the summons, halting at command when he had progressed but three paces.

To Dick, looking absorbedly on, the scene was a thrilling one.

"Who are you?" demanded the Filipino sentry, suspiciously.

"A comrade in the cause, like yourself," replied Owen, composedly, in Spanish.

"A Tagalo?"

"No, a Pampanga; but none the less true to the cause."

"But I heard you talking with your friend in

English. Is that the language you speak up in San Fernando?"

Nelse ought to have been staggered, but he wasn't.

"English?" he laughed. "Of course! I got through the Americano lines and spent three weeks in Manila, learning the little English that I know. You see, I am a bolo man. English is the language that helps me, when I am in a tight place, to get close enough to an Americano sentry to use my bolo on him."

"And your friend speaks English?" demanded the sentry, who was still regarding both suspiciously.

"Only two words. I am trying to teach him more. When he has learned the tongue of the big Yankees he will be of much more use to me than he is at present."

"What are you doing on this road to-night?" insisted the sentry.

"Naturally, what we are sworn to do. We are prowling towards the Americano lines."

"It may be all right," said the Filipino, dubiously. "But I think the best thing I can do is to

hold you here until the officer of the guard comes along. He will tell me what to do."

"And you will have *Commandante* Porlac's cane about your head and shoulders," growled Owen, wrathily.

"On the contrary," retorted the sentry, "he will praise me for doing what I thought my duty."

Dick's heart began to sink a trifle, in face of the sentry's stubbornness, though he still had great faith in his friend's resourcefulness.

"Come," said Owen, peremptorily, "we are going on unless you insist upon detaining us."

"That is what I must do," replied the sentry, holding his rifle pointed at the spy's breast.

"*Diablo!* You fellows who carry Mausers think you are the whole army," cried Owen, testily. "Well, then, hold us, since you seem bent upon it. *Commandante* Porlac's orders to me cannot then be carried out. It is all right. I promise you that by to-morrow morning you shall not be carrying a rifle. I will see to it that you are sent to labor with the Chinos. You ought to make a fine and handy man with a shovel on the intrenchments!"



So confidently did the bogus Filipino speak that the real Filipino began to weaken visibly.

“Oh, well,” he replied sulkily, “we are all friends of the cause, I suppose. If you are sure that you have the *commandante’s* orders, I will not keep you here longer.”

“And well for you that you did not, I can tell you, my friend,” snapped Owen. “Come along, *muchacho!*”

In a twinkling they were past the sentry, hurrying down the road.

“That was a close squeak!” muttered Dick.

“For the sentry, yes,” was the grim reply. “If he had not listened to me, I should have sprung upon him, brushing the muzzle of his rifle aside, and would have slashed his head open with my bolo. I don’t care to do such work, but this is war, and a fellow can’t always be as particular as he would at home.”

Dick glanced down at the bolo in his own right hand and shuddered. To shoot men with a rifle in the heat of a spirited engagement seemed all right — honorable warfare. But to spring upon a fellow-being and try to split his head open with a heavy

piece of sharp-edged iron — that would be a good deal like butchery. Yet, as Owen had said, one can't choose in warfare. If they became embroiled in trouble with any sentry Carson determined to be on the alert, and to spring quickly to his daring comrade's aid.

A hundred and fifty yards down the road they were again challenged, by a stout, good-natured looking fellow, who eyed them sleepily and accepted their explanations, presented by Owen, in perfectly good faith. Two hundred yards further still down the road they were once more halted. Their challenger, this time, proved to be a little old man, so weazened and shrivelled that he probably did not weigh more than eighty pounds. Yet his eyes were bright as glowing coals, and he patted his rifle as he handled it.

“So you are bolo men?” he said, nodding at Owen's explanation. “Good luck to you! I was one myself, until yesterday, but I brought in the right ears of four Americanos whom I killed with my bolo while they were on outpost. It took me a fortnight to get them, but the four ears won me a rifle. I am the last sentry down this road. From

here on you will find no more of our forces except the outposts and the bolo men. Look sharp, or you will get the ears of no dead Americanos, for there are many of our bolo men out to-night."

He stood grinning after them, waving a friendly farewell as the pair of fugitives trudged down the road.

"Confound the old reptile! Killed four Americanos, and carried in their ears, did he?" growled Nelse. "I don't know what kept me from finishing him in repayment. I suppose it's because I'm not quite as much of a savage as that ferocious old head-hunter."

From that sentry they had gone nearly four hundred yards down the road, when Owen clutched our hero by the arm, stopping him.

"Did you see them?" asked Nelse.

"No. What?"

"The outpost. I just saw three or four figures dart across the road. That tells me where they are. Come on, but be ready to halt the instant we are challenged, or whenever I give the sign."

Dick, therefore, fell a little behind the spy, peering anxiously ahead as they kept on stealthily down

the road. Some hundred yards further along they were stopped by a Filipino who stepped out from behind a tree.

“*Bueno*,” said this fellow, as soon as he caught sight of their insurgent uniforms. “But I had better walk along with you. Our comrades are watchful to-night, and they might fire on you by mistake.”

This *soldado* therefore accompanied them, calling out in a low voice after they had gone a little way. From the outpost an answer came, and Dick and Nelse were permitted to proceed, their late conductor vanishing back into the darkness.

“Good evening,” hailed Nelse, as they came in sight of a dozen figures squatted in two groups on either side of the road. A chorus of low grunts answered his salutation, and Carson, for the first time, saw a real outpost. These little bands of soldiers are posted all along the front of the army in the field, remaining on duty, usually, for twenty-four hours at a time. A part of the men are permitted to sleep, the rest keeping awake and alert for any possible forward movement by the enemy. In case the opposing army attempts a night attack

the outposts discover the movement in time to fire a volley from their rifles, falling back if necessary upon the main body of the army, which is by this time aroused. It is a point of importance for a general to have his outposts posted where the enemy will not expect to find them. Hence the changing of outpost parties is generally done after dark.

There were twelve men and a sergeant on this outpost, all huddled in the deepest shadow to be found at this point in the road, and all as silent as possible.

“What do you mean by talking so loudly?” whispered the sergeant, angrily, in Spanish.

“Your pardon,” whispered back Nelse in the same tongue. “I did not realize that you were so close to the Americanos.”

“Then surely you are a poor one to send out looking for them, if that is what you are doing,” replied the sergeant, sarcastically, as he contemptuously eyed the bolos carried by our two friends.

“Do not be so sure that I am as stupid as I seem,” shot back Nelse, commencing to undo his bundle of Dick’s discarded, slashed clothing. “See here, what do you say to this?”

Curiously the sergeant took up the clothes, examining the coat and then the trousers.

“Where did you get them?” he demanded.

“Where should I get them but over among the Americanos?” whispered Owen. “It was just after dark to-night. If you will examine you will find that the blood is hardly yet dry.”

The sergeant said nothing, but glanced enviously at Owen.

“I am going back for some more of these,” said Owen, carelessly, as he started to wrap up the clothes again. “If you are here at daylight I may have a rare sight to show you. How far away is the nearest American outpost?”

“Down the road, about a thousand metres, as we judge,” replied the sergeant. “They have not fired on us to-night, so we cannot be certain, but you may be sure the Americanos are guarding this road, and there is no outpost of ours below here.”

“Come along, *muchacho*,” ordered Owen.

“Good luck to you!” whispered three or four voices as the pair of pretended bolo men started down the road and melted into the darkness.

“ We shall do well to get into the woods soon,” whispered Owen, when they had gone a little way. “ I have no fancy for being on this road when we come upon the American outpost. Our fellows will think us rebels, and they are too good shots for us to take any chances.”

“ American outpost ! ” Those two words danced through Dick’s happy brain. To think that only a few hundred yards down the road were friends and countrymen in plenty, and back of them the whole of MacArthur’s division ! He longed to break into a run. Only prudence forbade. It might prove far more risky to reach the American outpost than it was to leave the last Filipino *soldados* to the rear.

“ What’s that noise ? ” demanded Dick, suddenly, plucking at his comrade’s sleeve.

Both halted, straining their ears to make out the sound at their rear. After a moment Nelse flopped to the ground, holding his ear against the earth.

“ A horse’s hoofs,” he thrilled, “ stopping at the outpost, too ! Dick, my boy, unless I’m mistaken your escape has been discovered. That rider must be a messenger with the alarm ! ”

“Up quick, then, and run!” quavered Carson, bending over to pull Owen to his feet.

“And get ourselves potted by Uncle Sam’s sharpshooters! No, thank you!” retorted Nelse, still lying upon the ground, but with his eyes turned back toward the Filipino outpost. “Get into the edge of the woods, and lie still until further orders. Don’t talk! I’ve got to think!”

Just off the road bounded Dick Carson, crouching low under a tree, his fascinated gaze bent on his friend. Our hero did not tremble. The events of the night had steeled him. Henceforth he was sure to be cool in action, daring in risks, and quick to obey orders.

“There’s a half dozen of the rascals coming down the road as fast as they can,” reported Nelse, peering, but not yet stirring. “Now, four are taking to the woods, two on either side; the other two are still in the road. That was an alarm, sure enough. Now, then, look lively, and don’t waste a second!”

As Nelse gave this last command, he partially straightened up, darting into the woods, never turning to see if Carson were following him. But Dick was right at his heels.



Acting as if on instinct, Nelse darted into a clump of jungle, turning like a flash and holding the bushes parted for Dick to follow.

“Lie low! Don’t dare to breathe aloud! *And get as good a grip on your bolo as you know how!*”

Dick obeyed, his heart beating fast from his recent exertion. But that soon passed, and he marvelled to find how cool he had become. He became grimly conscious that he was ready for all the fight that the events of the night might now bring forth. His bolo no longer seemed to him an implement of butchery, but one of righteous self-defence.

Out on the road they heard the patter of bare feet as the two Filipinos out there ran by. Dick smiled at the thought that they would not much longer keep on in that direction without getting into danger. But there were four more in the woods — two on the same side of the road with themselves — to be reckoned with.

Before long the pair hidden in the jungle heard a rustling to the north of them. It was one of the *soldados* from the Filipino outpost. In a few moments more, peering out between the roots of the bushes, they could catch a vague glimpse of his out-

line, as he moved along twenty feet away. He went slowly on ; it was some time before his prowling ceased to be audible to the hidden fugitives.

Then all was still again — so still that Dick fidgeted to set out again, but he knew that Nelse Owen understood much better what the situation required. A half an hour passed without a stir or sound on the part of the hidden ones. Then Owen gave a sudden, significant grip at Dick's arm.

Softly pattering feet told the rest. Looking out to the road, Dick counted five shadowy figures file past. Owen wriggled until he got his mouth against one of Dick's ears to whisper :

“ That accounts for all but one — the fellow we've got to look out for.”

Another half-hour passed by. In that deep forest of bamboo and mahogany the stillness was complete, until —

Swish ! swish ! Not more than fifty yards distant from them, in the direction of Malolos, came that sound. It was made by somebody coming through the forest, painstakingly parting the bushes.

Very, very slowly it came nearer, as if whoever

was peering into the bushes was trying to cover pretty wide sweep of territory. But at last the sound came alarmingly close, and then the two startled hidiers in the jungle beheld a Filipino, Mauser-armed, coming toward the very clump that sheltered them. He was looking straight at the bushes, holding the rifle before him.

Before Dick realized it, the muzzle of that rifle penetrated into their very lair. A hand shot out and grasped the barrel of the rifle, while in the same instant, Nelse Owen rose to his knees, his right hand poising his bolo. In the same second it left his clutch, made a turn in the air, and the dull side of the blade struck the side of the Tagalo's head.

With a moan, the insurgent sank to the ground, letting go of his rifle, which was in the American spy's hands as he leaped to his feet.

Darting out of the bushes, Nelse held the clubbed gun aloft for a second only. Thump! Squarely on the top of the prostrate Filipino's head landed the hard butt of the Mauser.

"Have you killed him?" shuddered Dick, emerging in his turn from the jungle.

"No," answered Owen, after bending over the

fellow. "I ought to, I suppose, but I haven't the heart to do it. It goes against the American grain, I guess, to kill a helpless wretch, no matter how great the provocation. But hustle, my boy! There isn't a second to spare. There are other outposts along the Filipino front, and there's no knowing how many of the rascals we may run into. Not that I care, though," he added with a reckless laugh, "now that we've got a rifle to fight back with."

With what seemed but a single movement he unfastened and snatched from around the waist of the unconscious Filipino a belt at which were hanging several boxes well filled with Mauser cartridges. For an instant Owen lingered—long enough to throw back the bolt of his captured rifle and ascertain that the magazine was full of cartridges.

"Follow me, and show how fast you can sprint!" next directed the spy, himself racing through the woods with more speed than stealth.

For two or three minutes they raced along unobstructed, save for the hindrance of the underbrush. Then, as unexpected as a clap of thunder from the skies, rang a volley to the rear of them, less than three hundred feet away.

“I’m hit!” growled Owen in a low voice that brought Dick bounding to his side.

Wheeling about, Owen shot back the bolt of his Mauser, sighting and firing in the direction from which the shots had come. In hardly more than the same number of seconds he fired all five of the cartridges in the magazine. Then, throwing open the magazine, he jammed in another clip.

“I guess I’ve silenced them,” he conjectured gruffly.

“Where are you hit?” breathed Dick.

“In the side. Guess it ain’t as bad as it might be. Kinder catch hold of me and help me to run. It looks as if we’d better make good time, if we’re going to get through to-night.”

For some distance they managed to run at a fairly brisk trot. But after a while Dick began to feel that his comrade’s speed was slackening. A moment or two later Nelse pitched. But for Dick’s strength, quickly exerted, the American spy would have fallen to the ground.

“Let me down,” begged Owen, and Dick did so.

“Now, scoot! Run fast to the American outpost. When you’ve gone a little further, yell out

in good English that you're an American and a friend. Get to the outpost, tell them what has happened, get a few of the boys, and come back to me."

"But I can't leave you here like this, hurt and helpless!" quivered distressed Dick.

"If you don't, I'm a goner!" gasped Nelse. "Do as I tell you. Leave the rifle here with me, and I ought to get along all right!"

Hesitating but a second longer, our hero wheeled, disappeared into the brush, and was gone, racing as if a hundred lives depended on his speed. He had gone some distance before he remembered the important part of his instructions.

Halting, then, he shouted:

"I am an American. Don't fire! I'm coming to you for help!"

Some distance ahead he heard a confused babel of voices. Then there was a tremendous crash just ahead, a line of fire through the trees, a whizzing of bullets through the air—and Dick Carson fell wounded.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## AN OUTPOST AMBULANCE CALL

“It felt as if a sledge-hammer hit me!” ruefully muttered Dick, as he laid his right hand where a bullet had pierced his shoulder. The pain was intense.

Before he could shout out there was another crash ahead, a sharp fringe of fire, and once more the bullets tore through the shrubbery about him. His hat was carried off by one of the Krag-Jorgensen bullets.

“Stop that!” he shouted in his loudest voice.  
“You’ve wounded an American!”

“An American, are you?” called a voice.  
“Why the dickens didn’t you say so?”

“I did, but you fired just the same.”

“We couldn’t hear what you said,” answered the same voice. “Took you for a Filipino. Are you able to come on?”

“Yes.”

"Come along, then. But say! Get into the middle of the road, where we can watch you as you come along. In this place it doesn't do to take anybody's word for too much."

"All right. I'm coming," shouted the boy, adding grimly: "Try not to make any more mistakes. It hurts!"

He retraced his steps a few paces until he came upon his hat. As he bent over to pick it up, he felt a shoot of pain through the wounded shoulder that caused him to moan. As he walked toward the road, he snatched a few leaves from a bush, holding them over the double puncture of his wound.

Reaching the road, he hurried along as fast as he could.

"Are you armed?" called some one in the darkness just ahead.

"Only with a bolo."

"A bolo? That's a mighty queer weapon for an American!"

The thought of Owen lying back there in the woods, perhaps dying, enabled Dick to put on a burst of speed that would not have been possible otherwise. In a few moments he found himself fac-



ing a dozen stalwart volunteer soldiers. He halted at arms' length, smiling at the bewilderment with which they stared at him.

“Boys, we're sold,” roared the sergeant. “We've let a Filipino come right up on us. But we've got him, anyway. *Amigo*, hand that bolo over, and be careful how you do it, if you've any notion of keeping on living.”

The sergeant's revolver was in his hand, cocked, as an effective guard against any treachery on the part of this supposed Filipino.

“Funny where he learned to talk such mighty good English,” muttered one of the soldiers who stood looking curiously on.

“Isn't it?” smiled Dick, as he passed his bolo to the sergeant. “Did you ever run across a native who could speak English as I do? Can't you understand that I'm an American, who has disguised himself to escape from Quingua? See here!”

With the hand that was not disabled Dick tore open his shirt, showing white flesh where the dye had not touched it.

“A white man, by jinks!” ejaculated the sergeant. “My boy, I'm sorry we fired into you.

Fellows, if any one of you has a bandage package, do your best to dress this poor chap's shoulder."

"I guess that will wait," spoke up Dick quickly. "Back in the woods, badly hurt by a Filipino bullet, is the man who made it possible for me to get away from the Malays. You'd better send out and get him in as soon as possible."

"How far out?" asked the sergeant.

"Less than half-way to the enemy. Hurry! I'll guide you there."

"I'll send four men," mused the sergeant, looking around him,— "two to bring in the wounded man, and two to fight, if necessary. But you wait, younker, until we bandage that shoulder. You don't want to bleed to death, do you?"

"I want to see my friend got in here safe, the first thing I do," uttered Dick. "The woods are supposed to be full of bolo men to-night. It would be fearful if they should happen upon him, defenceless as he is!"

"Hurry up, Bill!" ordered the sergeant, and one of the soldiers came running forward with his haversack. Tossing a small package to one of his comrades, Bill took a pair of seissors from his

haversack, and nimbly snipped off sleeves of blouse and undershirt, baring the injured shoulder. In a twinkling, between them, they had the shoulder bound.

“That’ll do until you get to the hospital,” said the sergeant. “I wish I could send more than four men with you, but it wouldn’t do to leave the outpost too weak. Now hurry, boys; and as for you, younker, try to go straight to the spot, for it won’t do to lose your way out there.”

Carelessly throwing their pieces forward, ready for a prompt shot, four men stepped out, following Dick in open order down the road. What splendid specimens of soldier-manhood they were! Dick had thrilled with a national pride in them at the first sight. Great, strapping fellows, with faces, necks, and forearms bronzed near to the color of copper — giants in blue shirts, khaki trousers and leggins, tattered campaign hats, and frayed cartridge belts. They were of the type of men whom Senator Beveridge, on his first glimpse of them in the field, declared to be “great, splendid blonde bulls.”

Dick led the way unerringly to the spot where

he had left Nelse Owen. The American spy still lay there, trying to stanch the flow of blood with a fragment of cloth torn from his blouse, but he was lying in a pool of blood.

“Thank Heaven you’ve come, fellows,” he muttered fervently. “But be quick in getting out of here. A few moments ago I heard the soft steps of some one prowling around in the darkness. It wouldn’t be any fun to have a few bolos come whizzing about your heads.”

“Look out for the rascals, fellows,” directed one of the soldiers, “while I fix a first-aid packet as best I can on our friend’s cut.”

The three spread out, covering the thicket from any sudden approach. In a few moments Owen had been cared for, and the amateur surgeon announced the fact. Two of them picked him up, reaching the road with their burden, while the other two soldiers vigilantly watched the rear. Dick, armed with the Mauser which Nelse had captured, aided them.

In this fashion they kept along the road until they reached the outpost. No attack was made upon them.

“Another Filipino, eh?” laughed the sergeant. “The woods seem to be full of American Filipinos to-night. How badly are you hurt, Jack?” This is the name by which soldiers address each other.

“I’ll be all right,” answered Owen, cheerily, “as soon as a doctor has had a chance to see me.”

“You won’t have long to wait,” rejoined the sergeant. “The field officer of the day came galloping down here to see what the row was about. When he heard, he faced about and went back at a gallop for an ambulance. The major and his team ought to be here in ten minutes.”

“We did a pretty mean job, that we can’t brag about,” muttered one of the soldiers, sheepishly. “Wounded two of our own side, and I don’t suppose there was a Tagal out in those woods that got so much as scratched by us.”

“You didn’t hit me,” protested Owen. “It was a Mauser that got me.”

“And we thought we were shooting Tagals,” went on the sergeant. “On an outpost like this it doesn’t pay to take many chances when you

think the enemy are around. One of the Iowa boys had his head chopped off, last night, by a bolo man."

"We don't blame you," broke in Dick, earnestly. "We're too glad to be among Americans again. I feared that day would never come."

Up the road sounded the heavy rumble of wheels.

"Here's the cart," announced the sergeant. "Most likely the major is with it, too."

Up to the outpost rolled the covered ambulance, drawn by a pair of monster mules. As it stopped, from the seat beside the driver a portly man of middle age, wearing the shoulder straps of a major, leaped down to the ground, the soldiers straightening up and saluting him.

Behind the major came a young surgeon. He at once investigated Owen's wound, saying:

"You're all right, my friend, but it's a good thing you didn't have to wait an hour more. We'll take you up to the Montana hospital at the depot. As for you, my boy," uncovering Dick's shoulder and examining the wound, "well, you'll have a painful time for two or three days, and be all right in a fortnight."

Owen was lifted into the ambulance and propped up on a seat inside. Dick stepped in and sat down on the other side, the major and the doctor following them.

“Good-by, boys,” sang out Dick, as the ambulance driver started to turn his vehicle around. “I was never so glad to see any one as I was to see you to-night.”

“Night?” laughed the major. “Look over there.”

He pointed to the east, where the first crimson streaks of day were showing. Their adventure had taken the whole night.

“Now, talk up,” directed Major Penrose, as the ambulance went slowly along the road, “I want to hear all about you.”

Dick told the story for both, as poor Owen was engaged in catching his breath. Major Penrose opened his eyes rather wide as the account progressed.

“Doctor,” said the major, turning to the surgeon, “you will want to take Owen to the hospital, of course. Do you mind if I keep straight on with Carson to General MacArthur’s headquarters? The

general will be very glad to hear what this young man can tell him about the enemy's trenches at the Bag-bag."

"It won't do Carson any harm, if he is attended to as soon after as possible," decided Dr. Lamb.

"I guess you'll get to Manila before I do," put in Nelse, turning to Dick. "If you do, of course you'll be taken to General Otis. Well, then, he sent me to Quingua on another matter. He gave that German a pass to go to Quingua, in the express hope that I'd be able to hang around and hear the German talking about that cargo that went astray. Well, I heard him this morning. Tell General Otis that I've got enough evidence to help you convict the fellow."

As this conversation was not intended for their ears, the major and the doctor looked out at the road over which they were travelling. By the time that they reached the Barasoain and Malolos station, where the Montana hospital was housed, it was broad daylight.

"See here, major," whispered Dick, earnestly, as they drew near to the depot, "do you see those two natives leaning against the corner of the building?"



“ Yes ; they’re friendly natives, I guess, who’ve been hired as laborers by the government.”

“ Perhaps they are,” was Carson’s dry retort, “ but I’ve seen both of those fellows in the Filipino camp at Bigaa, and again at Quingua.”

“ You’re sure of that ? ” asked the major.

“ As positive as I can be of anything.”

“ The little brown rascals are spies, then ! ” muttered the major. “ Wait a moment and I’ll fix them ! ”

While Owen was being transferred to the hospital, the major went up to a soldier.

“ Keep your eye on those two natives,” he whispered. If they stay here, don’t molest them. But if they try to go away put them under arrest, and keep them here, pending further orders from me.”

“ Yes, major,” answered the soldier, saluting.

“ Well, we’re all ready for a visit to General MacArthur, I guess,” remarked the major, as he climbed into the ambulance. “ Fortunately, the general is an early riser. Go ahead, driver.”

Then, as the ambulance went along at a little brisker speed than had been possible while Owen was a passenger, the major turned to our hero with :

“ My relief goes on at daylight, so I’ve got a little time to tote you around. Malolos looks a little different from what it did when you were here last, doesn’t it? ”

“ A great deal different. In the first place, it looks as if fire had swept through some portions pretty well.”

“ The natives set the fires just before they lit out. If they hadn’t been so hard pressed by our men they’d have made a more thorough job of it. As it was, they left buildings enough to house all our troops.”

There were other changes. It was decidedly restful to the boy’s eyes to see the streets no longer patrolled by Filipino soldiers, but by splendid specimens of American manhood instead. The streets were cleaner, too. There were many Chinos to be seen, but few natives.

How the memories came crowding back into Dick’s mind as he rode up that long, dusty street and into the very plaza where he had once faced a firing-squad! He remembered little Aguinaldo, on that notable day when the Tagalo dictator had saved the life of an American in the hope that the act

would add to his own safety if the time ever came when he was captured by the Americans.

And there, over the balcony of one building on the east side of the plaza, hung a great American flag! Dick's eyes grew moist as he gazed lovingly at it. He, more than any of the soldiers in sight, now knew what that flag meant. It flew from the headquarters of General MacArthur, commander of the army division on the North Line. The ambulance drew up before the door, and Major Penrose got out, followed by our hero.

They went upstairs, where an orderly standing at the landing informed them that General MacArthur was at breakfast, but would shortly be through. A young lieutenant came out to greet the major, and, getting a hint of the business that brought the visitors there, showed them into the room next to the general's office. At the major's suggestion, a soldier was sent in with water, soap, and towels. Aided by the major, Dick managed to wash off enough of the flesh dye to transform himself again into a very presentable white boy. The lieutenant brought in an army flannel shirt of blue color, and a coat, trousers, and vest of white duck, with a pair of soft

canvas shoes. In these Dick, still with the major's help, arrayed himself.

Then he was taken into the office, where General MacArthur, just from his breakfast, received them with a cordiality that went to the boy's heart. He asked many questions about the insurgents, and especially the positions which they held at Quingua and along the Bag-bag River, jotting down many notes. Provided with paper and pencil, Dick drew diagrams of the Bag-bag fortifications.

"These are excellent," cried the general, as he watched the progress of the drawing. "Later this morning I shall ride down to the hospital to see Owen. With what you two can tell me, I shall be well provided with inside information."

Here Major Penrose spoke about the two Filipino spies whom he had detained at the station.

"Good!" nodded the general. "I will have them sent down to Manila, under arrest. Carson, if you are feeling well enough, you would do me a great favor to stop at the depot when you go back there, and look over all our natives. If there are any others whom you can positively identify as insurgents, the major will cause their arrest."

Major, I will give you the necessary written orders."

Turning to the desk, General MacArthur wrote for a few minutes, handing two sheets to Major Penrose, and another to our hero.

"Your pass on the military train to Manila," said General MacArthur. "Carson, you are a splendid American. You have been of the utmost service to us. I thank you heartily, congratulate you most sincerely on your escape, and wish you all manner of good fortune for the future. Major, my thanks are due to you, too."

That being a sign of dismissal, both visitors rose.

The general shook hands with them, adding :

"Major, as neither you nor Carson has breakfasted, I have given some orders. Will you both step into my dining-room, and excuse me, as I am very busy, or shall be, over this new information?"

An hour later the major and Dick, greatly refreshed, reached the depot. The two Tagalo spies had attempted to go away, and were now seated on the platform, under the watchful eyes of the soldier who had been assigned to watch them. An hour more was spent by the major and Dick in looking

over the various native men about, with the result that three more were arrested as spies. Now that the dye had been washed from his face, Dick was recognized by all the quintet, who gazed at him with looks divided between amazement and hate. But it was a splendid morning's work for our hero, who had thus rid General MacArthur of the presence of five spies at one swoop.

A few minutes were next spent in the hospital, taking a temporary and grateful leave of plucky Nelse Owen, who was now much more comfortable, and pronounced as sure of recovery. Dick also had his own wound more skilfully dressed. Then the morning military train steamed in from Manila. Accompanied to the door of the first-class car by the major, Dick climbed in, got a seat, and looked out at the officer who had been so kind to him.

Two loud blasts from the engine, and the train began to move. Dick was now off for Manila — Manila and Herr Schwarz!

## CHAPTER XXIV

## THE GOLDEN CRASH

“ACH! This is impossible!”

“Quite possible, I assure you, Herr Schwarz, and very necessary. A check of yours for more than ten thousand dollars, Mexican, has been presented at the bank. You have less than eight thousand to your credit at the bank. We were compelled to ask delay in payment of the check, and I was told to step around and see if you wished to make a deposit that would enable us to meet your check.”

“But I am expecting heavy remittances by the next mail. There can be no harm in your paying this check. Surely my credit is good in Manila for a miserable two thousand or so.”

“Ordinarily, Herr Schwarz, it would be,” replied the young man who sat opposite him, the assistant manager of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. “But in these days of commercial trembling, when fortunes rise or totter in a day, we

have been compelled to make the rule that we will not pay out money that is not actually in our hands to the credit of the depositor who draws the check. You understand as well as we do why this rule is necessary."

"Suppose I give you my note for thirty days? You will take that for five thousand?"

"You will pardon us, I am sure, but we cannot. You have been remitting to Hong Kong so heavily of late that, if your remittances should not come to you as early as you expect, you might — pardon me — be unable to meet the note as promptly as we should like."

"To Hong Kong?" repeated the German, his face taking on a strange ashen pallor. "I have not sent a dollar to Hong Kong."

"The paper was drawn on a Berlin house," replied the young man from the bank, "as I am aware since we issued it to you. But it was negotiated in Hong Kong, as I am in a position to know, since our Hong Kong office cashed the paper."

"That was a breach of faith on the part of my rascally correspondent there," faltered Herr Schwarz,



under his breath. His pallor was increasing. It required an effort for him to steady his voice enough to say :

“ Well, let the matter stand for to-day, Mr. Bates. Say that I will have the check covered by to-morrow morning. Meanwhile, I will devise some way in which it can be done at the least cost to myself.”

“ Very well,” replied the banker, rising, and pretending not to notice the deep agitation of the German. “ Good morning.” He went out, leaving the German alone in his office, looking as if changed to stone.

After a moment Herr Schwarz got up, tottered to the door of his private office, turned the key softly in the lock, and came back to sit down and think. Nor did that stony pallor leave his face.

“ So the bank refuses to trust me for two or three thousand?” he moaned, resting his face in his hands and staring at the top of his desk. “ I have dreamed golden dreams, and this is the end of them ! It is the crash, and I am the victim, I who hoped to be a rich man before the end of the year ! If the bank had honored my check I should

have made a few thousand profit by to-morrow or the next day. It would have been a small start toward building up my fortune again. I was a fool to go into that speculation for sending arms to the Filipinos. If it had not been for that I should have had a clear balance at the bank of more than a hundred thousand. The price of the goods, the high charter price for the steamship, and the money I was compelled to deposit in order to guarantee the owners against the risk of seizure — ach! that was the fearful loss that has tossed me from the honored position of a rich merchant to that of a pauper. I wonder if Lebœuf would let me have a little money? But no! that is impossible. He is heartless, and, once he suspects that I am ruined, he will not even look at me.”

With a heart-broken sigh Herr Schwarz opened a drawer of his desk, and took out his private set of books, poring over page after page in them, in the hope that he would discover some forgotten asset that would help him out of his present predicament. It was a vain hunt.

“All went well with me, up to a while ago,” pursued Herr Schwarz, in his thoughts. “The

first turning was the night I met that accursed American boy, Carson. Through him I lost thousands. Not even my scheme of having him made a prisoner by the Filipinos availed me anything, for the boy told the story of that tobacco deal to Taylor, who saw Ellis in Hong Kong and posted him, thus spoiling another chance of mine to make thousands. I suppose the boy has died long before this. I wonder if there is truly a Heaven, which is punishing me for what I did to the boy?"

Herr Schwarz laughed bitterly. His thoughts persisted in veering around to that one subject of which he was trying his hardest not to think.

"Do the bank people suspect why I sent so much money to Hong Kong? *Can* they suspect? Bates looked at me strangely when he spoke of it. Does he guess? Worse, does he *know*? If it should get to the ears of the Yankee military governor"—

Herr Schwarz broke off with a terrified groan. He must think, and to think he must have action. He looked at his watch; it wanted a half an hour of noon, but he decided to start home earlier than usual. Perhaps in the less stifling air of Malate his brain would think faster.

Rising and putting on his hat, he went out through his counting-room without looking at his clerks. His carriage was waiting at the curb. He sprang into it, saying to the Filipino boy the one word "Home." Just in the interval of starting he noted a clean-cut young man in white who had been standing on the opposite curb. This young man stepped into a *quilez*. On the Bridge of Spain, over the Pasig, Herr Schwarz noticed that that particular *quilez* was travelling in the same direction. Over in Ermita he saw it again. Herr Schwarz now began to scan that *quilez* with absorbed interest. It followed all the way down the Calle Real to the suburb of Malate. As Herr Schwarz sprang out of his carriage in his own front yard, he saw the *quilez*, still bearing the young man in white, roll slowly by.

Going into the house, the German went straight up to his bedroom. Selecting a strong cigar from a box on the table, he sank into a reclining chair, trembling all over.

"Can it be that I am followed?" he demanded of himself. After a dozen agitated whiffs he rose and went to the window, staring through the blinds.

There on the other side of the street stood the young man in white. With a shudder the German tiptoed softly to a rear room, peering out through the blinds. It did not take him ten seconds to discover that another man lurked in the narrow lane at the rear of his grounds. Like a man in a nightmare Herr Schwarz returned to the front room, locked the door, and sat down. His face was dripping with cold ooze ; his eyes looked stony.

“There can be no doubt that I am under surveillance,” he uttered despairingly. “That can point to but one conclusion. My part in that arms affair has become known. First I was ruined ; now I am to be arrested.”

It was some time before his dazed thoughts could take further shape.

“In Germany they would shoot me for taking part in such business,” he groaned, at last. “The old Spanish governor-general would have given me the same punishment. I wonder what the Yankee law says on the subject? Ach ! I can’t die—I don’t dare to.”

So he sat there, the time slipping away, staring stupidly at the walls of the room in the hopeless

effort to think of something that he could do to avert the crowning disaster to his evil fortunes.

In the meantime the train had borne our hero to Manila. Hours earlier General MacArthur had sent the telegram that had resulted in Herr Schwarz's house being shadowed by two men of the secret service. At the Manila station Dick was astonished to find one of General Otis' aids awaiting him. There was a carriage there, too, in which they were driven straight to the Palace, over in the Walled City.

Dick had a long conversation with that gruff old man of arms. In it he went over all the important incidents of his captivity among the Filipinos, but dwelt especially on what he knew of Herr Schwarz's complicity in the plot that had so nearly succeeded in landing arms for the insurgents.

"Carson, you have done splendidly — nobly," said General Otis, warmly, at last. "You have had some terrible experiences, but throughout it all you have been American to the backbone. Perhaps you will never understand what a great service you have done your country in keeping thousands of new rifles from reaching Aguinaldo. That plot was so thoroughly arranged that, but for you, I am sat-

ished the rifles and cartridges would have got through to their destination. Be sure that I shall not forget your great part in the matter. And now I want you to do one more service for me. I have two officers waiting who are going to drive to this German's house. We know that he is at home. Neither of the officers have ever seen Herr Schwarz to know him. To make sure that there isn't a chance of the German escaping us, I want you to go along to identify him. Will you?"

"Will I?" echoed Dick. "Why, of course, sir."

General Otis sent for the two officers, a captain and a lieutenant from one of the regiments of infantry, and with them our hero set out in a carriage that bore them swiftly to Malate. Captain Gliscoe noted with a smile the young man in white clothes standing on the opposite side of the street, before the German's house. They drove into the yard, up to the door, and alighted. A Filipino servant came and stood in the doorway.

"Do not talk loudly, or make any noise of any kind," ordered Gliscoe in Spanish, in a low voice, as he clutched the native's arm. "Where is your master?"

“Upstairs,” replied the Tagalo.

“What is he doing there?”

“I do not know. I went up there an hour ago to tell him that tiffin was ready. He told me to clear out — that he did not want anything to eat to-day.”

“Lead us up to his room — silently.”

Without apparent curiosity the Tagalo servant conducted them up the stairs, voicelessly pointing to the door of the front room. Captain Gliscoe took a quick step forward, with Lieutenant Swain at his heels and Dick Carson bringing up the rear. Knocking on the door, the captain cried:

“Open, Herr Schwarz!”

From the inside came a voice so hoarse with terror and desperation that Dick did not recognize it, but shuddered.

“You will have to do your own opening, gentlemen,” answered the German. “I saw you coming, and know who you are. Well, you will get in here too late!”

Without a word more Captain Gliscoe put one of his powerful shoulders to the door and broke it off the hinges. Too late, as the German had said, for



at that instant a deafening crash rang out. Into the room rushed the three visitors, their faces quickly filling with horror, for on the floor lay Herr Schwarz, his head in a pool of blood, and near him a revolver from which smoke was still pouring.

The German still lived, as deep groans from his ashen lips proved. Without a word Gliscoe and Swain lifted him to his bed.

“ Well — you — came — too late,” gasped the dying man.

“ Yes,” answered Gliscoe, in a tone quiet but stern; “ you have yourself avenged the United States. It will not be worth our while to try to remove you. Do you want a clergyman, or any friend? ”

“ Let Carson come here,” requested the German, feebly, and Dick stepped forward. He went close to the pillow on which lay the ghastly head.

“ You spoiled my trade with Taylor,” moaned Herr Schwarz.

“ Yes,” answered Dick, tremulously, for the scene was full of solemnity for him. “ It was the only honest thing I could do.”

“ And you also spoiled my trade with Ellis.”

“Again, honesty required it.”

“I thought I had stopped you, by getting you into the hands of the Filipinos,” went on the German, in a voice that grew steadily weaker. “But Taylor saw Ellis at Hong Kong, and so my scheme was spoiled. Sir,” turning to Captain Gliscoe, “on what charge did you come here to arrest me?”

“Principally,” replied the captain, without evasion, “for an attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition to the insurgents.”

“Did *you* have anything to do with that?” demanded Herr Schwarz, turning his dimming eyes again toward Carson.

“Yes,” answered Dick. “I was a prisoner at Bigaa, overheard your plot there one evening, and got word through to General Otis in time to nip the business.”

“You ruined me,” groaned Herr Schwarz. “Boy, all my bad luck has come through you. And now I must die! No matter — I forgive you.”

Dick, who, you may be sure, did not feel that he was in any need of forgiveness in this matter, knew not what to say. Captain Gliscoe and Lieutenant

Swain stood back a little, listening and waiting for the end to come.

Herr Schwarz closed his eyes, moaning piteously for some moments. When he opened his eyes again, he asked :

“ Carson, I have been a scoundrel. I know it now. Can *you* forgive *me* ? ”

In that solemn place every bit of Dick's rancor vanished like the mist.

“ With all my heart,” he murmured softly, gazing down pityingly at the stricken wretch, and laying one hand gently on the sufferer's head. “ More likely I am really indebted to you, Herr Schwarz, for your plotting, though it gave me some weeks of a terrible kind of life, yet enabled me to serve my country.”

Some unintelligible words came from the German's lips. They were the last that he uttered. Captain Gliscoe called in one of the secret service men to remain with the body, and the callers who had come bent on arrest departed.

Thus the arms case closed with Herr Schwarz's life. There was some suspicion that M. Lebœuf was mixed up in the affair, but no proof could be

obtained. That astute adventurer, however, becoming uneasy over constant surveillance, closed his affairs in Manila, at a loss, and quietly vanished from the scene.

Nelse Owen recovered after a few weeks, and did much more excellent work for the army in Luzon, and in some of the other islands of the Philippine group.

As for Dick, he felt bound to enlist. To his surprise, when he mentioned that idea to General Otis the latter firmly forbade it. Instead, he sent the boy to act as a civilian orderly on the staff of General MacArthur. In that way Dick was able to see and take part in about all the fighting that followed, from Malolos to San Fernando. On a dozen occasions he proved his mettle splendidly.

One day in early June a telegram came to General MacArthur's headquarters in San Fernando, directing that Richard Carson report without delay to General Otis in Manila. The railroad not being yet repaired above the Bag-bag River, it was not until the next forenoon that our hero reached the city. He went at once to the Palace, giving his

name to one of the clerks in an ante-room of the general's quarters.

How handsome and manly Dick Carson looked as he walked into General Otis' room! He was clad in army khaki, spurs jingled at his heels, and a cavalry revolver hung in a holster from his belt. The sombrero that he held in his hand was battered and worn with hard field service in rain and shine. That boy looked every inch the soldier.

"Carson," said General Otis, looking up and noting the boy's lines with approving nods, "perhaps you thought I had almost forgotten your work and the promised reward. I informed the President of it, however. Yesterday I received a cablegram from him. He instructs me to offer you, in his name, a commission as second lieutenant in one of the new regiments now forming for service in this department. If you accept, you are to remain here on staff duty until your regiment arrives. Will you take it?"

If Dick failed to answer, it wasn't because he required time to think. He was stunned with joy; knew not what to say. He knew that the army offered the one life that could thoroughly suit him,

but he had never dared to hope for such luck as this.

“ Will I take it, sir? ” he finally managed to say.  
“ I wouldn't take a fortune for that appointment ! ”

And Dick is now with his regiment in the Philippines, doing his duty to the satisfaction of his superiors, and is likely to be heard from again.

THE END.

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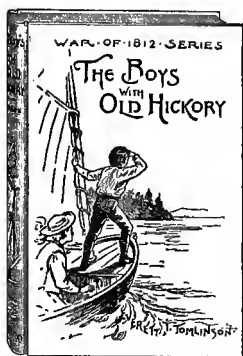
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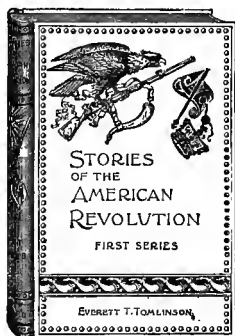
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